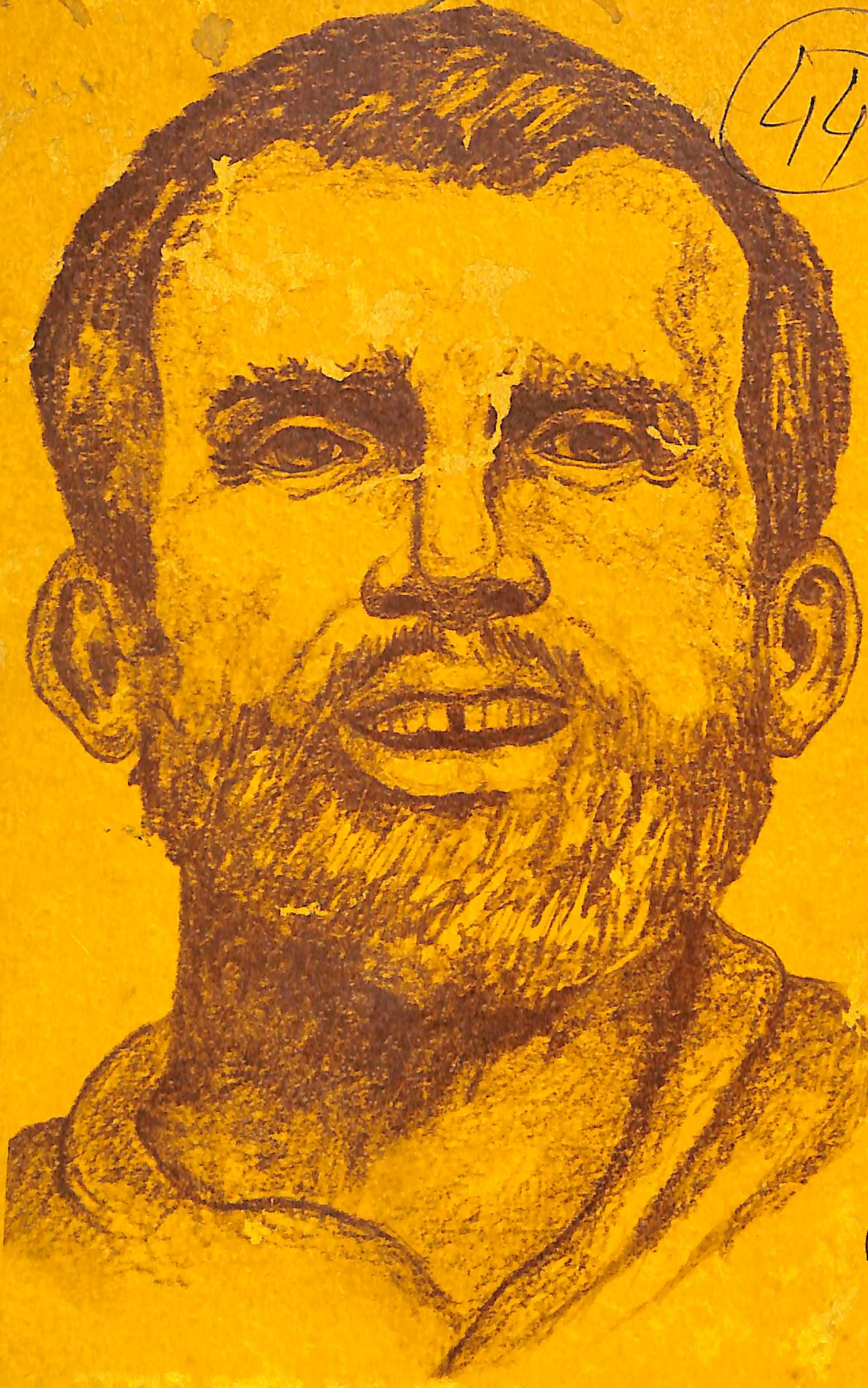
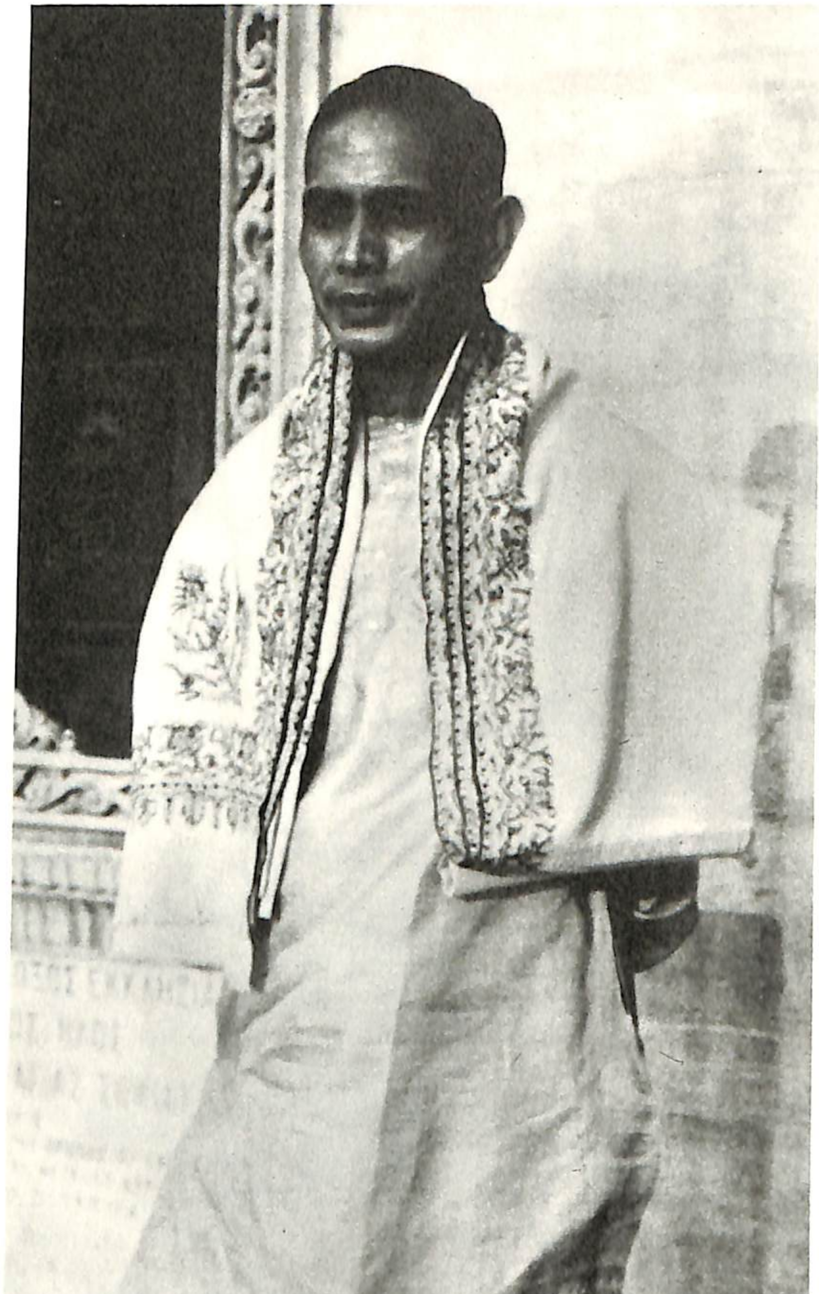


Samadhi & Beyond



Sri Surath Chakravarti

SAMADHI
AND BEYOND

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BY SRI SURATH

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Dedication

This book is dedicated especially to Sri Kalidas and other fellow pilgrims at the Yoga Center of California and also to Mrs. Lola Tipton. Their valuable spiritual companionship has been my inspiration.

I lovingly mention in a special way Mrs. Gladys Lauderbach whom I fondly call Mom. She has inspired me with her persistent effort to fit into her orthodox view the new values found herein. She's an eternal inspiration to me as a living example that age is not a barrier at any time for new expansion of understanding.

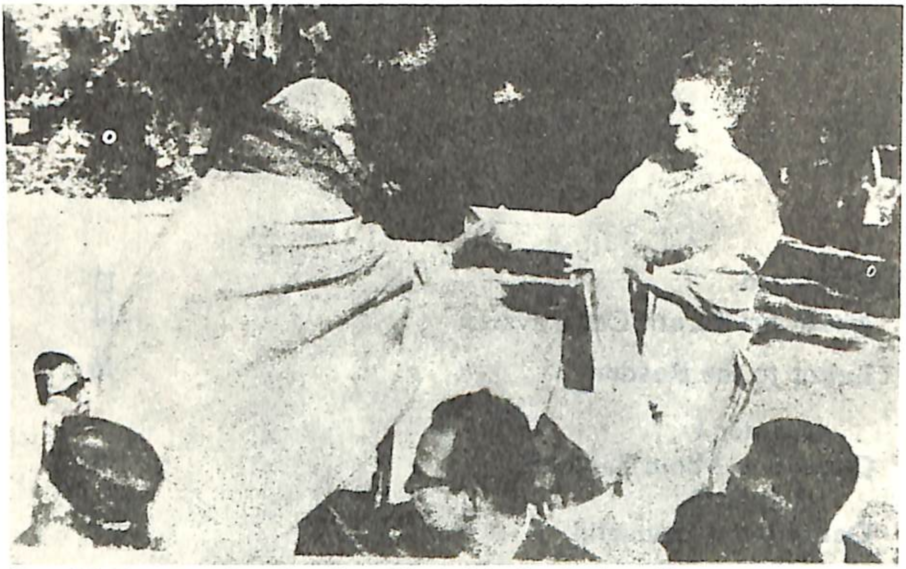


ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This book could not have come to light but for the singular effort of Mrs. Marjorie Ranney (Gayatri Devi). It is she who has made a systematic and strenuous effort for months and years to hunt through the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* for the values therein. She has also helped me to record my experiences with various saints to take the honey from the honeycomb.

In spite of a most arduous and earnest endeavor, it is impossible in such a treatise that involves so many novel and profound ideas and so many scriptural terms to make all the corrections needed to make a perfect book. There are so many original thoughts found here and there for beginners as well as for the most subtle spiritual persons that new terms had to be coined to give appropriate expressions. Too often the editors themselves were caught up in the ideas presented and forgot about their menial job of making detailed corrections. Let the readers, then, like the proverbial Indian swan, cast off the roughage and drink the cream.

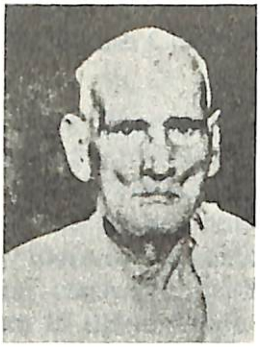
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Pandit Ramemdra Sunder Bhaktitirtha is handing over a copy of his book, "Sri Sri Ramakrishna Bhagabatam" to Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Prime minister at her residence in New Delhi on 16-11-70.



Pandit Ramendre Sundar Bhaktitirtha (West Bengal) receiving the National Award for Teachers (1970-71) from the Vice-President of India, Shri G. S. Pathak of Vithal Bhai Patel House, New Delhi, on 17-11-70.



FOREWORD

What you have written in SAMADHI AND BEYOND is more than I have done. Where others have stopped, you have started. There is none other in India, either saint or scholar, who has written on the subject of Samadhi in this way. It is something unique. Thakur's (Sri Ramakrishna's) blessing is on you more than on me, otherwise you couldn't have written what you have.

I have given permission to Sri Surath Chandra Chakravarti to include the above in the foreword of his book, SAMADHI AND BEYOND.

March 24, 1974 Pandit Ramendra Sundar Bhaktitirtha
(Indian Government Gold Medalist)

Pandit Ramendra Sundar Bhaktitirtha is probably the only person living today who has enjoyed the personal touch of Sri Ramakrishna. When he was only ten years old his father took him to Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar. In response to his father's instructions he pronamed before Thakur. Thakur placed his hand on him in blessing and told him that he would live long and would be famous throughout India as a scholar. Both of these predictions have come true.

With the financial assistance of the Ministry of Education, government of India, he has recently printed an inspired account of the life and teachings of Sri Sri Ramakrishna. This book, SRI SRI RAMAKRISHNA BHAGABATAM offers some new touches here and there on the life of Sri Ramakrishna. It is all the more noteworthy since it is written in Sanskrit verse with translations in English and Bengali. The book was published by Kashi Nath Bhattacherjee, 50/4, Grey street, Calcutta 6, India.

ABOUT SRI SURATH CHAKRAVARTI

Sri Surath is not the head of any organization. He is a private citizen living quietly in Calcutta these days. He was previously practicing as an Advocate in the High Court. Besides his law degree, he is the recipient of a Master's degree in philosophy and religion from the Calcutta University.

Even in his early childhood, he showed a marked interest in Yoga and voluntarily underwent many austerities and practiced the disciplines of various yogas. In pursuing spiritual values, he explored every religious concept and practice that came his way. Now at the age of just over 60 he is ready to reveal to others the fruits of his life-long search.

Through the spiritual experiences he gained the courage to remove all road blocks, wherever they have appeared. His perpetual question is always, "What comes after this?" "And then what?" He dares to say that there is no final goal wherein either the individual or the Cosmos Itself or God comes to a stagnant end in some heaven or in some Samadhi.

In the last three years, he has written and had published three books, BE YOUR OWN GURU, SCIENTIFIC YOGA FOR THE MAN OF TODAY and SAMADHI AND BEYOND.

BE YOUR OWN GURU gives the philosophy of the various schools of Yoga and shows how they each contribute something special to a new ideal that concerns the man of this age. The emphasis is that each individual has his or her own religion and Yoga. He explains

how the dimensions of human goal and aspiration is extended into Infinity and is ever expanding.

SCIENTIFIC YOGA FOR THE MAN OF TODAY gives the science and practice of various yogas. It shows how htere is a specific goal in each practice and how there is no clash one with another. A new style of Yoga is given in detail which includes the main features of all of the main Yogas. The science behind the practice is explained to help the aspirant to the stage when he will become his own Guru and develop his own religion and Yoga.

In his latest book, SAMADHI AND BEYOND, he has dared to say something new. A rational concept of soul and God is developed from a scientific point of view. He reveals his discovery of the pattern of how creation works through the process and experience of Samadhi. He explains how God has an ideal to achieve and what this ideal is for this age.

Sri Ramakrishna, as a living example of His own message is the main inspiration from which he develops hiw own particular angle of vision. He echoes Sri Ramakrishna's teaching when he tells how there is a special value to be achieved in each religion. He explains how the sum total of these values converge into a new value to be achieved in the next age. As humanity realizes this truth, the basis for religious wars and conflicts and competitions will go and a peace based on individuality and originality will be the basis of the new era. Each religion will find its own place and value in the Cosmic play and each ideal will contribute to the others. The individual will cater to his own individuality. This individuality will in its turn contribute to the Ideal to be achieved next in the Cosmic Play. A new Ideal will always be extending the horizon. Since the "Ideal" always takes place first in the mind of God, man, through the experience of Samadhi can have a glimpse of the new world-to-come before it is a manifested creation.

Sri Surath invites any who are thinking along these lines to exchange their views with him.

Letter to the Reader

SAMADHI–

My effort is to help you to be aware of your individual path and to formulate your own viewpoint. I never say that this or that is bad; my intention is to help you understand your own state of awareness and reach your own goal. I want to say rather that this shows this, and that shows that.

With the passage of time, man's needs and opportunites change. For example, cannibals could eat any raw flesh. You cannot do this. Why? Life and its expression is going from gross to subtle. Therefore, religion and religions must go ever higher.

In this age, we must gather the honey from all the combs, and then make our own honeycomb. It is in this respect that I want to help you. Others may say: "Come to me. Take my view." I say: "*Don't* take my view; you must formulate your own view—but what is your own view?" My suggestion is that the ideas you find on the following pages will help you to recognize and understand your own viewpoint.

I shall try to show you all the systems, past and present, and to point out the ideals of these systems and how far the prescribed practices are able to take you on the journey to your ideals. Then you can see for yourself how far you have progressed, and how far each system

can take you. I want you to know their orthodoxy and their dogmatism, their rationality and what opportunities they offer. I want to explain every angle of these systems so that you can formulate your own judgment.

In talking about Samadhi, I am speaking of everything in spiritual life. I would like to show you how God can be realized from this or from that corner through this or through that door. We will come to appreciate that the meeting point is Samadhi. The approach in these pages is unique and peculiar to myself, because I am including all approaches; you, the reader, can evaluate how far the method you have chosen suits you. But after you have achieved the ideal of the system you are following, I urge you to appreciate that eventually you, too, will have to develop your individual approach in your own manner, and in a way that conforms to the individuality of your nature, so that you can go into the beyond.

It may be appreciated that this is a very complex way to approach the subject of Samadhi. During the course of the years, I have approached many saints, Sadhus (holy men) and Pundits (learned men in scriptures) to study their schools of thought and their different methods of practice. From time to time, I have placed myself under a Guru or teacher and diligently followed his teachings, until I felt I was fully experienced in his particular school.

I have studied various scriptures to see how multifarious ideals and practices contained therein cohere. I have tried to catch the idea of Samadhi according to the Patanjal system of thought and practice, as well as according to the Buddhists. I have searched all the scriptures to find other points of views and other practices; I have tried to look at Samadhi from the point of view also of the Vedantists, the Bhaktas, the Christians, the Muslims, the Tantriks, the Tibetans and Zen Buddhists and have also looked into some other views that came my way. Taking the essence from each of them, I am endeavoring to condense these various angles of perception, and show how they interrelate, even though each

school of thought differs from the others. It is difficult to understand any system unless one has practiced it for a considerable time and realized something thereby.

Naturally, in this lifelong search, I have formulated my own particular angle of vision, based on my own experiences. Necessarily, my angle of vision is intermingled with the contents of the following pages. Within myself, I know what is, and what is not. I don't need anything. I am full. God has given me everything I need. I seek only to share with you, dear reader, what God has shown me. I, myself, know nothing.

My aim and ideal is not to produce a literary masterpiece; neither does this book have a customary introduction, body and conclusion. The casual reader is likely to find the material herein repetitious. However, it is expected that one who has patience to read, meditate, reread and meditate some more will find each chapter a self-contained unit. The duplications will then not be duplications at all. Each repetition is an effort to show another angle of truth in its totality.

To envision something beyond one's experience is difficult, if not impossible. Only by extricating every facet of spiritual experience from all scriptures, and viewing them from every possible angle, can a future evolve out of the cloud-of-unknowing and serve as a beacon light to those who want to adventure into the unknown.

I have written this book for all those who have courage to know the unknown.

CHAPTER I
QUESTIONS ABOUT SAMADHI

There are more hoaxes and bluffs in spiritual life than in any other field. Still it can boldly be said that *Samadhi* is an exception. It is a demonstrative certainty. All the the main scriptures contain references to and descriptions of Samadhi, although some of them do not name it as such. From generation to generation individuals of different faiths have recorded their Samadhi experiences, which appear to have taken multifarious courses with results that seem to depend upon the individual's attainment, and the goal of his spiritual practice. Names may differ, terms may differ,* experiences may differ, but Samadhi is here, now, as it was then and there.

We find a thread of consistency running through all these bonafide experiences that can give us the clue to the reality of Samadhi—to what it is, to the prerequisites and how it fits into the Cosmic Play. As stated above, although the experiences of Samadhi may differ in some ways, there is an inherent uniformity in their diversity.

Before Samadhi can be intelligently discussed, it must be defined and decided what distinguishes it from other similar experiences. With this in mind, the author pro-

*Bible—Psalms 46:10, "Be still and know that I am God," is a reference to Samadhi.

poses to answer the following questions from his angle of perception and of experience, and he will also include the views of various other important schools of thought and practice. The author will occasionally point out his own feelings and experiences, and explain how these views fit into the larger concept of Samadhi as recorded by great souls who have left their records in the various scriptures.

The following questions will be discussed: First, what exactly is Samadhi—a state or a process? If it is the former, is it a final state of experience or a stepping stone to a higher state? Is it one absolute state or does it comprise different states of consciousness? If it comprises several states of consciousness, are all these of equal status and to be valued equally, or is there a hierarchy whereby one state leads to another? And if Samadhi is not a state, is it a specific step in the process of Cosmic evolution? What is this process and whither does it lead? In other words, how does Samadhi fit into the Cosmic Play? What are the aims or goals of Samadhi, and how and where do they culminate?

The other questions that arise are: Is it a purely mental state arrived at through reasoning, or is it a state arrived at through intuition without any reasoning? Is Samadhi an experience on the physical plane, the mental plane, the super-mental plane, the intuitional plane, the supra-mental plane—or is it experienced simultaneously on all of these planes?

Now we should ask further: Is it a state of awareness or of consciousness—or is it a state of the awareness *of* consciousness? If it is the latter, then who is conscious, and of what? Is it a consciousness of self or a consciousness that some "I" within is conscious of a blissful, peaceful state? Is it a consciousness of having some power, or is it a combination of all these things?

We should also inquire what effect Samadhi has on the cells themselves. Does Samadhi have an effect on Karma? What is its effect on predisposition and

Samskaras (past Karmic imprints)? What is its effect on other mental modifications? Is the blissful state arrived at through Samadhi a permanent one or does it come and go? Does it cause any changes in the physical body, the mental or the spiritual nature of man? What happens to the soul which, after attaining Samadhi, leaves the body in death? Does this soul take another human body? Does it rise to a still more subtle plane or does it melt into the Cosmic sea never to be individualized again?

In addition to discussing the different states of realization that come with the practice charted by various schools, and discovering how these practices take the consciousness through the five sheaths or Koshas, the author will also point out the various concepts of Samadhi as recorded in different periods of history, to show how these concepts fit a recognizable hierarchy.

Where does the mind return from to make such speeches describing these experiences of Samadhi found in the scriptures? When the mind goes beyond speech, there remains a feeling only: blissful, powerful, serene joy. This is said to be the Realization of Brahman.

In very simple words, Sri Ramakrishna tells us this when he says that God-realization in the form of Samadhi has never been contaminated through speech. In other words, this depth of God experience simply cannot be conveyed in any language. Attempts have been made to express every other sense-experience of the human being; even this is only partially successful through speech or even through more subtle expressions, such as painting, music and other art forms.

Those who have experienced Self or God-realization are unanimous in their conclusion that such a subtle experience can and will never be expressed through outward agency. He knows only who knows: "That it is. That it is." That is all. In fact, no human being can even on the gross level ever fully explain through speech or any other mode of expression his full experience. There always remains something unexplained even by the greatest scholar,

the greatest painter, the greatest singer, or the greatest poet. In trying to express the feeling which comes in touching even the fringe of Infinity we are all like little children who babble helplessly. In fact, the deeper the realization, the less the talk and the less the attempt to express. With either a guest at a sumptuous feast or a saint in a rapturous mood, there is little inclination to talk. When relations are intimate, who speaks? When the salt doll returns to dissolve into the ocean, who comes back to say? When a person first touches the fringe of Infinity through Samadhi he may joyfully exclaim, "I am He! I am All!" like Devi Sukta, the illustrious girl spoken of in the *Vedas*.

Naturally, the pertinent question arises, "If Samadhi is so elusive and so subtle, why, then, is it important and how is it possible to try to discuss Samadhi at all!" The answer is obviously difficult and the author can merely say that he feels an urge to do so. He never contemplated doing a work on Samadhi, but one day it simply came to him to do so. These pages contain past recollections in the different stages of his experiences together with what he has read in the scriptures and what he has heard from others. In fact, even though this attempt cannot express all, at least the light that shines from these thoughts will show from which direction this Infinite source of knowledge, bliss and joy comes and whither it goes.

All the above eloquently testifies to our limitation in discussing this most profound subject. Even though the difficulties are great, the author humbly believes it is desirable to venture into this subject. Heaven is described in the scriptures as a place to be experienced after death; however, there is no one to relate the exact mode of living there.

But Samadhi has been experienced by the living. It is a demonstrative certainty. At least Samadhi can be considered a bridge joining human aspiration with that which is known as heaven or as Divinity, which is in Itself unknown. So with this acknowledgement of the limitations,

and with the expectancy that something can nonetheless be hinted at, let us proceed.

It should be noted that the author likes to stress his own point of view which is that regardless of the kind of Samadhi—Sahaj, or the Samadhi which, according to Sri Aurobindo, is realized through the mixing of the supra-mind with the descent of Divinity into the so-called mortal structure, or any other state of transcendental realization—none of these, or even the sum of all of them can ever be considered the final state of Samadhi.

Samadhi is not an end state or the end of a process. It is not a finale. Whatever the spiritual pursuit, Samadhi by itself is not a specified, defined and destined goal which, when achieved, is the end of the Cosmic Play. The experience of Samadhi is a demonstrative certainty proclaimed by aspirants and devotees for thousands of years and it is a state which is ever expanding and growing. New dimensions and new horizons will eternally come. Samadhi is part and parcel of Cosmic evolution. It holds the key to the evolutionary process and as such it is an ever-expanding opportunity.

In the *Upanishads* we find that the soul is at the same time both motionless and dynamic. Thus we can say that although from one angle of vision the soul is permanent, at the same time from another angle it is changing and developing. We beg of our readers to keep this principle in mind as they evaluate and experience the ideas in the following pages.

Let me repeat: NEW HORIZONS WILL ALWAYS ARISE.

With this, the author is humbly echoing Sri Ramakrishna's beautiful remark that there is no end to God-Realization. Likewise, there can also be no end or final state to Samadhi. With every word herein, the author wishes to emphasize Sri Ramakrishna's words, "Go beyond Samadhi."

CHAPTER 2
DEFINITION OF SAMADHI

Now that it has been established what the discussion of Samadhi is to include, it is expedient to discuss what, exactly, Samadhi is. This is more difficult than it appears at first glance. Samadhi is an experience that transcends the finite mind which responds to the outer gross senses and mixes with them. Language is the vehicle used to express these experiences.

When mind is turned inward, not only do the gross senses cease to make an imprint on the mind, but the mind, when mixed with spirit (or, in other words, unmanifested Divine Energy), can no longer express with either words or thoughts the blissful subtle state it finds itself in. Words and thoughts belong to the realm of the manifested world. Thus, with this acknowledged limitation, we shall penetrate deeper into our subject to find that we are confronted with further difficulties. The first challenge is to select an appropriate definition and concept of the word *Samadhi* that is acceptable to all schools of thought.

The Patanjal Yoga system and the Theraveda school of the Buddhist system are the main exponents of meditation. Both of these systems try to establish that concentration can be equated to Samadhi; this does not conform to the ideal given by other schools. In

considering these differences of opinion, it must be appreciated that there is a paucity of appropriate vocabulary and equivalent English for the Sanskrit and Pali terms found in the Hindu and Buddhist scriptures describing meditation. Words expressing these intricacies are just not available in the English language. Therefore, as you try to follow the ideas in the following pages, you will find that meditation is necessary in order to realize or understand the meanings of the best English equivalent at our disposal. When it is necessary to use an unfamiliar Sanskrit or Pali word, the author will try to help by putting the most approximate equivalent word in parenthesis.

There seems to be some agreement about the relationship of Samadhi to meditation among those who follow the Jnana point of view. The Vedantists, the Zen Buddhists and, to an extent, the Buddhist Theraveda and Tibetan school all seem to agree that when meditation culminates in some sort of final state, this can be described as an ecstasy or a rapture of eternal bliss or quiescence or a state of realization, or all of these. In general, this is the experience of concentrated mind called Samadhi by these schools.

The spiritual practices associated with various schools of thought (except Zen Buddhism) all start with more or less the same process, namely overcoming worldly entanglements and influences, including warding off the impulses coming from sensory nerves and from mental modifications. With this aim they all utilize the starting point of concentrating on some gross object, and gradually shifting the object to a more and more subtle one.

To bring the impulses from sense organs and the disturbances from mental modifications under control is the aim of all these schools. Various other schools also adhere to this aim, although the practice is sometimes less direct.

From this point there arises the first problem: the

goals and ideals of the different schools appear to be different. A Vedantist or Advaitist sees his goal of self-realization in the field of knowledge and wisdom. A Zen Buddhist aspires after a thunderous silence (then what?). A Yogi of the Patanjal school aspires after Kaivalya, that blissful state where the soul is liberated from Prakriti (phenomenon) and all vital body processes stop. Some Bhaktas, through meditation, seek their Ishtas; other Bhaktas, through devotional love, strive for a closer, blissful association with the personal God in stages which they call Sarupa, Samipya, Sayujya or Sasti. A Catholic Christian may desire to achieve higher states of realization which, although they have not been adequately described, are figuratively termed *houses*.

Thus it can be appreciated how, when the knowledge and practice of Samadhi gets a bit advanced, complexity brews. In conformity with the different professed ideals of the various schools of practice, different techniques, rules of conduct, and attainments—including sometimes Siddhis (occult powers)—are sought as each tries to establish his apparently diversified goal. But the child of religion may well ask the simple question of all of the stalwarts of these schools: "Why do you all quarrel when you all agree that everything in this world, including human beings, comes from one source—call it God, Absolute, Unmanifest or 'X'—and all will eventually return to this source?"

When this point is appreciated, how can it be declared that the goal is different, whether it is called Samadhi, Nirvana or something else? The taste of the final goal must be the same even though the expressions, experiences and terms vary.

This point may be appreciated if we give an analogy. If it were possible for one apple to be tasted by many people of different races all over the world, or if the one apple were to be given to a number of people of the same nationality, locality, or even if the group were restricted to persons of the same age, it would be found that each person's experience of the apple would differ from that of

the others. No two things in the world are identical; there are no two human beings exactly alike. So the expression will differ not only in a point of space but in the span of time. This is not to say that the apple itself is different. Ideals have varied, do vary, and will vary because diversity is the law of the world. Nevertheless, unity remains in the fact that the source of this diversity is the same.

All life is moving stage-by-stage in the spiral action of evolution. The returning movement of the coil of energy always goes in the same direction. However, the spiritual laws and attainments, although the same, may and will be differently termed or expressed. But ultimately the same goal is to be achieved. Thus it can be expected that all schools of thought may eventually come to share the same definition of Samadhi, provided we give a flexible enough definition which can serve as an elastic overcoat. Our goal is to find a definition that can be universally accepted by all persons in all ages and schools.

Controversy and dispute may arise over our second proposition, which we now place before our readers. Should the accepted definition of Samadhi refer to it as the goal or as a state that is not the end in itself? In other words, is Samadhi the beginning of a new dimension of experience and expression? Until now, many schools of thought have cried that Samadhi (by whatever term they call it) is the goal to be achieved. Others say Samadhi is a tool. The author boldly suggests that Samadhi is a state out of which comes the beginning of a new Cosmic Play.

Our third proposition is higher, more subtle and novel and may face even more difficulty. The author proposes that Samadhi is practiced, in reality, by the Supreme Being. Heretofore, man has assumed that it is he who attains the state of Samadhi; we propose that it is God Himself who is in Samadhi and man only tunes himself to Divinity in that state. It is through this experience with God that something new springs forth.

From this era of realization a new manifestation has

its beginning. This new form or ideal will then find its place in the differentiated world. In other words, the individual Samadhis that are experienced by individual human beings are merely the minutest reflection of the Cosmic State of Samadhi and it is from this that something new comes. Although we shall develop these ideas adequately in a later portion of this book, still we are offering them here, in a nutshell, as a prelude to our treatise.

In the preceding pages, it has been explained what Samadhi is. At this point it is necessary to know what Samadhi is not. Just as the author has taken great trouble in his previous book to emphasize what is Yoga and what is not Yoga, in this book it is necessary to explain the difference between a spiritual Samadhi and a lesser or pseudo-Samadhi.

The late Swami Hariharananda Aranya, who is the foremost authority of this age on the Samkhya and Patanjal systems, had some important views showing the basis of a spiritual Samadhi. Swami Aranya has been very explicit in determining the Yoga which bears the fruit of liberation. It is expedient for every individual and for the whole of humanity to take heed of these words, which emphasize a point of view also found in this book. There is enough space here only to summarize and we will mention two examples showing how the individual experiences build on each other.

Swami Aranya explains that there are certain important requisites for practicing any Yoga that can lead to liberation, and that these requirements must be observed by all who sincerely seek results. These are: constant practice, detachment from worldly desires, and the power of concentration to get rid of mental modifications. He says that the subjugation—or rather the annihilation—of mental modification is achieved through a Yoga called Samprajnata Yoga. This is a practice of keeping the mind on one particular subject to the exclusion of everything else. Samprajnata Yoga will then be followed by Asamprajnata Yoga, a more subtle practice. In this

Yoga, subject and object are merged into one and the consciousness of the object vanishes. Then there is liberation, which is the goal to be achieved. The mind ultimately merges with the Infinite mind.

There are also other methods. For example:

Mother Krishnabai of Anandashram—in Kanhangad, Kerala State, South India—has described her experience in merging with the Infinite and of what follows. Starting with her beloved Guru's (Papa) instruction to chant "Om Sri Ram, Jai Ram, Jai Jai Ram," Mother Krishnabai was given further disciplines by Papa until she realized universal vision. Thereafter, with the help of her beloved Guru and with much effort on her own part she after some days brought her consciousness again to the earthly plane.

She then resumed her loving service—but in a different depth—to her Guru, Swami Ramdas, who is lovingly called Papa by his devotees. She sees him as God-Incarnate and as such He is ever-present in all beings. It is this experience of realization that shines in her every thought and action, as she lovingly serves all who come to her at Anandashram.

Raja Yogis, Jnana Yogis as well as the Patanjalists and the Buddhists all prescribe systems of practice for achieving universal consciousness. It is now obvious that successful accomplishment of Samprajnata and Asamprajnata Yoga is possible only through a concentrated mental effort. In other words, a volitional conscious effort is necessary by the meditator. So, any state of concentration wherein the mind becomes still, when the benumbing of it is caused by shock, stimulant, hypnosis, medicine, or drugs cannot be considered a step in Samadhi wherein liberation from the mundane world is accomplished. On the contrary, the voluntary and conscious control of the mind is a first necessity.

It may sometimes happen that a person who has never done any spiritual practice in his life, or who has practiced in his youth but ceased since then, may suddenly (either spontaneously or through the touch of a

great Yogi or an Incarnation) experience an equilibrium of the mind which can be considered Samadhi. If it is a true Samadhi, his worldly desires will drop away and he will eagerly pursue further spiritual practices. He will start where he last left off, and his efforts will be fruitful.

In other words, such experiences of true Samadhi which do not seem to be explainable through observable disciplined spiritual practices, can be regarded as the fruits of some disciplined practice consciously undertaken in the past.

Now we can find a definition designed to include all schools of thought. *Samadhi is a state of intense silence and intense calmness wherein the individual mind voluntarily merges with the Cosmic Mind. In this union some new and dynamic impulse is born, to find fruition in the Cosmic Play*. Samadhi is a state and a process arrived at through intense discipline and long practice of concentration through some prescribed method wherein cells develop and mature until they can realize and absorb the subtlest Divine grace and force.

This comes only after the culmination and consumation of all the states of concentrated mind have been achieved. Out of this emerges a new vista, enthroned in the profoundest and subtlest wisdom, which Buddhists call Samapatti and Vedantists call Ananda. Other schools of thought have also given their particular names.

If the above description holds good for Samadhi, then we can inquire about Samadhi experienced by saints, half-saints, want-to-be-saints and the no-saints, when the conditions described above are absent. It is not uncommon to hear that spiritual people all over the world are experiencing Samadhi in this way or in that. If one were to travel to all corners of the globe to locate spiritual aspirants experiencing Samadhi, the number would swell at a rapid rate. Therefore, if the conditions enumerated in the above definition are not met, are all these testimonials to be considered as false, incorrect, as hallucination or as exaggeration of the particular experience or what? Generally speaking, we feel they are not incorrect

statements. Rather they can be considered as experiences which do not fulfill all of the aspects we are including in a spiritual Samadhi.

As we have said and shall discuss further, Samadhi is like a state of pause on the springboard. However, there is not only *one* springboard which is to be considered as *the only* springboard. Whenever a person collects his mental modifications in a single state and holds it for a time, his power of understanding exalts him to a new vista of knowledge and experience. This happens on various planes of attainment. The resulting experience is a mental state of equilibrium arrived at through some sort of concentration of mind.

This experience is mostly on the gross physical level and the involvement is that of the Annamayakosha (physical sheath). Therefore, although we do not cry down such mental states as being of no value, truly speaking this author is elevating the concept and requirement of the spiritual experiences that he considers worthy of the term Samadhi.

So Samadhi is an eternal jumping board. It is the place of pause in mankind's eternal pursuit of realizing something higher. Whenever a person resorts to some sort of spiritual practices, he is knowingly or unknowingly setting for himself a new goal or a new horizon wherein he will be able to achieve or attain this state of Samadhi. This brings him to a certain temporary halt, or stop over, which seems to bring about—for the time being—a complete cessation of all activities. This is a state of realization in which there is indescribable joy. As this mood matures, the devotee finds that this halt is a springboard from which he makes yet another leap.

Samadhi is a state of realization which is both static and dynamic. It is, at the same time (as we have said above), a state of realization and experience wherein the next goal is visualized and the path revealed. The Cosmic Principle is in constant change. Therefore, the concept of Samadhi which was accepted a thousand years ago does not hold good today. Any true and lasting

religion is and must be dynamic. The constant movement of the Cosmos is from gross to subtle, and then continuously to more and yet more subtlety, and so on. Many concepts of a thousand years ago are no longer valid today, in their entirety; something new must continually be added.

As we have explained above, when the devotee attains a certain high state of Samadhi and some new horizon flashes out, he realizes something he cannot express, and what he realizes cannot be known through the experience of his past life. But he finds a new dimension there. Like Shelley's skylark, he makes another flight into a new horizon. Thus, it is evident that Samadhi should not be considered as the final goal to be attained in the Cosmic evolution.

But how does this change—this new ideal—come to fruition? In the experience of Samadhi wherein the imprint of a new goal is achieved, it is the individual cells that receive the force of this impact. This brings about a definite change in the consciousness and the ability to act in a new dimension.

However, nothing happens suddenly. Samadhi, both for finite being and for God, is a continual process. Only when the cells of the finite being have become divinized is there sufficient accumulation for an impact of higher realization on the spiritual level. This is the time when Samadhi can be consciously realized. The cells become divinized either through special spiritual practice or through the natural process of evolution. When a person has achieved this goal of divinizing his cells, he then becomes aware of this blissful, sensitive, subtle, elevated state which is a higher Samadhi.

We may here present an analogy to clarify our thought. When a person is riding in a plane or in a helicopter or even on an elevator or traveling up a high mountain, he is not aware of the gradual release of atmospheric pressure. But at certain stages and at certain moments the effect becomes so appreciable on his body cells that he suddenly becomes aware of it. As we have

stated above, both the natural force of evolution and the result of conscious spiritual practices bring about certain and constant changes as they go on continuously and eternally. After his cells have reached a certain stage of purity, sometimes it happens that he is suddenly or noticeably uplifted spiritually; when he becomes aware of this mood he is experiencing Samadhi. At this moment he is aware of a blissful state in which change is going on at a deeper and faster rate.

Neither the constant changes in the created world nor the experience of Samadhi can be explained through rational thought. Rational process and reason do not go far and can only inappropriately explain the Cosmic manifestation, either through the principle of involution or the principle of evolution. The process that God has made for Himself of descending or coming down or involuting, in whatever terminology it may be called, is continuous *ad infinitum*. Yet it can also be perceived in the various stages.

Here the author wants to sound a word of caution. From the above it might be supposed that man is always in a state of Samadhi and it is only his awareness of this state that stands between him and the joy, peace and bliss of the experience. As we all know, man as well as everything else in this Universe is ever-changing in the evolutionary process of the Cosmos.

Samadhi is a state wherein the imprint is specially noticed and experienced. At first glance it would appear that whenever man is aware and says, "I am now in a state of divine bliss, I am in Samadhi," then he would certainly be enjoying Samadhi. There are, however, other factors that should be considered. The aspirant should appreciate whether he is in a trance or whether he is enjoying pseudo-Samadhi or whether he is actually experiencing a spiritual Samadhi. He should also determine if this fits the hierarchy of spiritual experience that has thus far been known to man.

There are several simple yardsticks that can safeguard man from being duped into accepting less than the

spiritual experience for which he is longing. First, the impact that is realized in the blissful state of Samadhi must be on the spiritual level. Although there are moods or states in which a change is impelled on the physical, psychic or mental levels and these are even sometimes accompanied by experiences of some kind of joy, they are not necessarily to be called by the term Samadhi. Samadhi, in essence, means a spiritual experience. Suspended animation in itself is not necessarily a true spiritual Samadhi. As we have said before, Samadhi is experienced only when the body and mind have reached a certain stage of purity and when something new on the spiritual plane comes from the Samadhi. As we have repeatedly said, Samadhi always gives birth to new ideals and to new Cosmic Principles or Values, as the mind becomes more and more subtle.

Second, there is some change in the individual himself that can be easily noted. A true experience of Samadhi automatically frees man from his worldly desires. His ego loses its individualistic nature and his mind begins to grasp the higher and more subtle truths relating to the Cosmos itself and to its play. When an aspirant or a devotee has heard, seen or felt God, all worldly glamors seem as mere child's play and their power to entice him vanishes. After such an experience, his only aim is to be melted into the blissful sea or to enjoy the play by continually tasting the sweetness of Divine bliss. So when an aspirant or a devotee begins to find the evidence of these changes in his nature, he will know that his cells are being divinized and that he is experiencing a true Samadhi.

The living, pressing urge for expansion is the call to be found in every human being. The urge for Divinity is really God's attempt to love Himself more through his multitude of forms. Therefore, God Himself goes through Tapas (religious austerities that generate Cosmic Energy); in and through His Divine Samadhi, He attains that state of manifestation and diversion that drives his own finite forms back to Himself.

As we have said before, this is the return journey. It is like the Prodigal Son who, in Samadhi, wants to meet the Father in the Cosmic whole. Thus, although the concept of Samadhi is always changing, the root can be traced back in the principle scriptures of the various religions such as the *Bible*, the *Gita* and the *Vedas*, etc. These concepts are often not explained in detail. However, when they are considered in the light of the mental instruments inherent in the man of each particular age, then a certain definite pattern emerges. A hierarchy of experience becomes apparent. For example, the man of two thousand years ago was limited to the mental instrument he had then; but today man has a new opportunity and a new challenge. In the evolutionary process the finite mind has now developed so much that it can enjoy more and more subtle concepts.

For us to realize this, it is important to fully appreciate the testimony of the great spiritual concepts of the past. New truth must always find solid ground before it can give a positive contribution to human thought. Let us, therefore, examine some of the concepts of the past with the eternal question in mind: "What next?"

Advaita Vedantists prefer to describe the state of Samadhi as being not of bliss or joy, but only as an eternal, serene quiescence. They hold that when something is said about bliss or joy it is necessarily assumed that there is also a knowledge or at least an awareness of a state of consciousness in the soul which is of an objective nature, even though it is painted as a subjective one.

In the attitude, analysis, or description of Samadhi, some sort of subject-object relationship filters in. They say that Samadhi is a state that is indescribable and, as such, it cannot be called full of joy or bliss nor even a state not full of joy or bliss. That is why the Buddha kept silent when he was asked to describe in a positive way what exactly comprised the state of Nirvana.

The Buddha does, however, describe Nirvana negatively by saying that it is a cessation of all sorrows

and that the achievement of it takes one beyond the cycle of birth and death.

But when the Buddha was requested to say what the positive state of Nirvana was, he kept silent; the Tibetan Buddhists say that there is a state of Buddhahood beyond Nirvana.

Some Vedantists propose something else, that from this state of Samadhi comes Ananda, a state of joy or bliss; and this state of quiescence is not the end of the show.

Thus, we see that whenever one school of thought finishes or comes to a halting place in what is to be attained as the supreme goal, they say nothing, or declare that such and such an experience is the end of everything.

This is hinted at in the *Upanishads*. One Rishi was questioning another Rishi about the hierarchy of the mysteries of the universe. One question continually led to another question higher and more subtle than the previous one. Ultimately there came a time when the Rishi to whom the questions were being directed called a halt and forbade any further questioning.

He said: "Do not put any more questions or else your head will fall." This points out that in explaining the mysteries of the world, either through Samadhi or through knowledge, there comes a point when the human intellect or intuition or Buddhi loses its potential power to grasp any further truth.

We find a similar attitude arrived at by Sri Chaitanya in his discourse with Rai Ramananda. When Sri Chaitanya was describing the hierarchy of moods in God contemplation, he stated that Radha Bhava (the mood of devotional love to God) was the greatest Bhava or the most sublime mood. When pressed further to tell what this leads to, Sri Chaitanya told that it could not be described and that there was nothing beyond.

In searching the scriptures, we can find records of countless sages, saints and even of Avatars that show how their sayings come to a halt with the statement or intimation that either this or that is the highest reality, or

the highest God-realization, and that beyond there is nothing.

Only in the message of Sri Ramakrishna do we find—for the first time in the spiritual history of man—that there is no end to God Realization. We find a clue in Sri Aurobindo's thought that it is only the ego that seems to come to an end. The soul, which is an integral part of the Cosmic Soul, keeps its Divine identity in the Cosmos.

This identity is not in the least dependent on the outer senses including the subtle mind sense. When man discovered that his ego, together with all the senses, could be and was dissolved into the Cosmic sea, he wrongly deduced that surely this was the end of everything.

But how can there be an end to the Cosmos? How can something that is admittedly of a Divine Nature be finished? Sri Ramakrishna danced with joy at the experience of a soul that had found its identity (*found* not *lost*) in the Cosmic Ego.

In this dance, we can find a clue that the soul goes on and on, not as a human-Divine soul enthroning a human body, but as a particle of the Cosmic Soul dancing in new forms indescribable in a beyond that is—beyond.

Those who have experienced this mysterious union with Divinity say that the experience cannot be described. Sri Ramakrishna made several attempts, when coming out of a state of Samadhi, by feebly saying: "My Divine Mother won't let me speak."

So we are left no choice but to agree with the Buddhists, the Advaita Vedantists and all others who say: "Nothing can be *said* of the beyond."

What comes in and after Samadhi baffles any description by language. Still, there is always something new.

CHAPTER 3

EGO AND AWARENESS

Man begins his human life by becoming increasingly conscious of the world. He knows himself and experiences himself at first only as a finite ego. Since this ego is the main starting point of awareness, it is expedient to clarify just what this ego is and how it plays to develop awareness on the physical plane.

Today, educators are crying *Develop the ego*. For the average man in the West, developing the personality is the ideal to be achieved. But *Give up the ego* is the cry of The Eastern religions. This command is offered to those finding themselves drowning in misery, who are told that their ego is the root of all troubles. It is also directed to those who are striving to know their real Self. They are told that giving up the ego is the prerequisite for the experience of Samadhi. However, going deeper into the matter, it is noticed that these contradictions are only different stations in the grand Cosmic procession.

But what exactly is the ego? We must find the answer if we are to know exactly what we are to give up. *Webster* says that it is "the individual as aware of himself." *The Encyclopedia Britannica* says that it is "the self in contrast with anything other than the self." Some say that to give up the ego means to give up the I-con-

sciousness. Others say that it is the desires of the ego that cause all the trouble.

First, let us attend to the seeming contradiction. It can be said that the ego-consciousness must be *developed* for survival on the physical level and this same ego must be *transformed* to realize the aspirations of man on the spiritual level. In other words, the whole evolutionary pattern, starting with the lowest kingdom, is directed towards developing an ego-consciousness. But when this consciousness comes to a developed state in the human being, the ego must then be dethroned, or we can say more accurately that it must be transformed into something higher. To put it in another way, it must discover its own identity. Let us see how this works.

As indicated above, *ego* means *I-ness*. The emphasis is on the *I* or *selfhood*. We know that there is little or no ego in a new born child. Some months or years pass before the child can develop the sense of ego. In the infant stage, this ego-sense seems to be distributed in a diffused way and for some time there are only faint signs of ego-consciousness. Gradually, as the child experiences life, the sense of ego comes. This can be noticed by observing the behavior of a child as it uses its first few words to express its response to its environment.

In the beginning, the child does not refer to itself in the first person, but seems to suggest that it is the body of another person who wants to eat or drink or play. For example, if the child is called Tom and he has learned to respond to that name, then he will say: "Tom wants to go." "Tom wants to eat." "Tom feels hungry." "Tom is afraid." In other words, even though Tom has learned to express himself and has developed some ability to respond to his environment, still his sense of *I-ness* is in a very rudimentary form.

Looking to an earlier stage in evolution, we also find some form of ego in the animals. Let us take the example of the calf. Just after a calf is born, it discovers that it has a need to stand and to move. We observe that

is its first effort. It tries to fulfill the instinct to eat and to follow its mother, who is the source of its food.

The first awareness is of the need to stand in order to enjoy a better and more comfortable position. Instinct pushes it onward to discover that it is also helpful to move from one place to another. It tries to go to the mother who is standing at a distance, and to imitate her. Thus, it exerts itself until it can stand and take a few steps. When the first attempt fails, something within its consciousness makes it try again and again until success comes. It is this type of behavior in all infant forms of life which consolidates a number of forces to serve the individual purpose or need. In other words, with the concentration of some feeling, there dawns a consciousness which establishes a sense of ego.

While the animal ego does not develop to the extent of the human ego there is, nevertheless, some obvious development of ego in the higher species: the horse, dog and ape, for example. This is shown in the familiar story about a horse. Once a horse was very ill-treated but because of the immediate circumstances it could not retaliate. At a later date and more convenient time it wreaked its vengeance by biting the person who had mistreated it.

We can also reiterate the well-known story of Androcles and the lion. When the Roman slave, Androcles, was taking refuge in a cave to escape the wrath of his cruel master, a lion limped into the cave and looked at him piteously. At first Androcles hesitated, then he went near the lion and found that one of the beast's paws was swollen with pus; a thorn had stuck in it, and since the lion had not been able to extricate the tiny sliver, the sore had grown worse. Androcles took the thorn out tenderly and removed the pus. The lion was immediately relieved of his pain. Soon after, the lion departed.

Some years later, Androcles was condemned to death by the authorities and thrown into the arena to fight a

lion. He was to kill the lion or be killed himself. As was customary, the lion had been made ferocious through extreme hunger before being turned loose inside the arena, where he was expected to down his dinner. But to the surprise of the spectators, the lion, instead of pouncing upon Androcles, sat at his feet, licking and caressing him. The lion had recognized him as the same person who had removed the thorn from his paw.

On careful examination, two things can be appreciated. The lion had developed a certain sense of individual consciousness or ego. This ego had been associated lovingly with another creature, namely Androcles. In other words he had acted from a sense of *I-ness* or from his identification with his lion body which had felt pain caused by the thorn. He connected Androcles with the relief of the pain. The lion's ego showed an awareness of his own experience.

The second state is even more important. At the stage when the lion met Androcles in the arena, it was confronted with two distinct impulses. The body was still identifying itself with the *I* or *ego*, and the lion's first impulse was to satisfy its hunger and to devour the meal consisting of the human he found presented to him, namely Androcles. However, another factor of consciousness presented itself; the remembrance of the past incident came into play. This was a higher impulse. Then followed a fight between two impulses: the first to eat and satisfy hunger, and the second a remembrance of the past, which motivated the lion not to eat.

Even though there was only a little of the higher ego formed in the lion, this ego gave the verdict that gratitude should be respected even at the cost of hunger. In other words, the higher, more subtle ego prevailed over the lower ego.

Ego develops in every form of life in one way or another. Through various experiences, there is a gradual formation of ideas around the core of the feelings aroused in a permanent entity that is called the personality of a

person. In the human being, this consciousness is very complex, because the human mind carries with it the latent impressions it has received both from its past incarnations and from this incarnation. These are called Samskaras or predispositions. These Samskaras are formed gradually through the association of the ego with various and sundry experiences. For example, if a child is accustomed to taking sweets in his early days, he becomes habituated to eating them. When he grows older, he may realize that the sweets are bad for health. Then he tries to give attention to his rational faculties which tell him that he should give up sweets. In this way, a new Samskara is acquired. Thus, the ego changes as life goes on.

Although man tends to be influenced constantly by past Samskaras, instinct also plays an important part in human life. For example, anger is a tool of Nature. Nature has planted this emotion in human and animal bodies in order to activate them sufficiently to act aggressively for their own defense when they are placed in danger. Nature provides man with instinctive feelings like anger, love, hatred, etc., for protection and preservation of his individual person and of the species as well. These instincts are superimposed upon the personality or self.

However, we shall see later how a time comes in man's evolution when the higher self or soul acts without putting reason into operation. When primitive man acts and reacts and behaves in the external world from his instincts to protect and preserve his being, he is behaving much like the animals who act and react to the same kind of stimuli. While he is reacting to these instinctive stimuli, the soul is gradually intermixed and wrongly identified with these feelings.

These instincts are necessary at a certain stage of development for the preservation and protection of man's body. But, as he becomes wiser and wiser, he finds that Nature's imposition of instinct is solely for the preservation and protection of the species. It further dawns on his

consciousness that the preservation and protection of his body is not the whole show. However, man identifies himself so much with these superimposed feelings or instincts that he sometimes stops thinking of himself as an independent entity separate from these qualities. In other words, he fails to realize himself as a being who is above these superimposed emotions. A very gross example of this state is seen when otherwise rational human beings lose their identity and their sanity in the emotions of a mob.

Generally the term ego has been used very loosely and in error. For example, when we are neither honored nor respected by another person, and we have expected recognition, we say that our ego is hurt. Actually, it is our vanity that is touched by this experience. When a child is neglected instead of loved we say that his ego is hurt. In this sense, we again use the word ego. Here ego is considered to be the extreme state of centralization of this *I* personality which is mixed up and confused with the child's feelings.

It is not his awareness as an individual self that is threatened; it is his opinion about how he wants to be treated that is involved. So we can see how a person gradually becomes bereft of the power to separate the emotional, instinctive self from the real self. In an effort to preserve the species, Nature imposes various feelings on the soul which act as instincts to form the motivation for action.

We acquire additional Samskaras (predispositions) when we express emotions such as hatred, anxiety, love, etc. These become mixed with our personality. And we can add further to the identification of false qualities with our ego when we contemplate desire and visualize future expectations to be gained or enjoyed. We misidentify these desires by considering them as the essence of our real self. These desires become Samskaras and affect our behavior.

For example, let us say that the idea and desire comes to a person to have a beautiful house, but he has no means to achieve it. The persistent and prevailing desire

to have a house gradually becomes a part of his nature. He begins to lose control over his reason and gradually does not heed any facts or advice which are against his acquiring the house of his dreams. The deep feeling to have the house becomes a part of his nature and he is obsessed by this desire. His ego will be hurt if anyone acts to deny him this house.

Summing up our observation, we see that Nature infuses certain instincts into the human being for the motivation and preservation of his life. Furthermore, man acquires through his various experiences and desires some ideas and feelings for himself. In addition to these feelings, Nature automatically infuses some of the ideas and feelings acquired through personal experience that may be necessary for the protection and development of life.

Yet some are in excess. The individual often does not know where to stop and the poor victimized soul falls from its high state to a low stature. When this rational self becomes an irrational self, we inaccurately say that our ego is the villain which has caused us to be mixed up and swept away from the higher, more rational path. But the trouble in most cases originates from improper and unwise desires.

Are all desires to be eliminated? Again, it is important to proceed cautiously. Sometimes this desire by the self to enjoy something may actually be necessary for the preservation of the person or species. But this is not always true. A person often excessively multiplies his real needs through undue and selfish desires. In most cases, the desires result primarily from persistent thoughts.

This process is explained beautifully in the *Gita* in Chapter 2, verse 62. Here it tells that constant thinking on the objects of the senses breeds attachment and from this attachment comes desire. From desire anger springs forth when the desire is obstructed. The next verse explains the natural process that all too often follows. This anger gives birth to delusion. From delusion comes

confused memory and from confused memory comes the ruin of reason and with the ruin of reason, a man perishes because his rational sanity has left him.

What happens when a man broods on an object of the senses? Let us again refer to the illustration of the house. He begins to think that although he has a house, it does not suit him. He desires a house as beautiful as that of his friend. So he starts brooding over his desire for a better house.

At first there may not be very strong or very persistent thoughts. But gradually the thoughts come more frequently; gradually the attachment comes. As the thought strengthens, the attachment begins to develop into a deep-seated desire to have a house.

In other words, the attachment of mind to the thought of having a new house is the first step. The mind develops a casual attachment to a house, then this desire for a new house begins to take root until a deep urge to have the new house forms. Now what happens? There is an effort to do whatever is possible within every available means to get this object of desire.

As this desire becomes deeper, it becomes more powerful. Then the person may beg, borrow or steal to fulfill the desire. In so doing, he will be confronted with obstacles, opposition, and hindrances from others. All of these cause him to be agitated and he builds an atmosphere that is not pleasant; if his efforts continue to fail, he becomes frustrated and angry.

If this anger is not subdued, his equilibrium will be swept away. From this anger comes delusion and then forgetfulness and the loss of the ability to be rational.

But the matter does not end even here. The *Gita* explains further that the person may even forget who he is. As a victim of delusion, the person's memory is confused. He loses sight of the origin of his frustrations; he cannot appreciate that the ensuing trouble has all come from the original thought that he would like to have a house like his friends. He forgets that he is a respectable

person in society. He forgets that previously he did not like to borrow or steal. In short he will forget all his good conduct and will lose track of his former rational nature. He abandons his high ideals.

With the confusion in memory, all this is gone. His reason is distorted and he now is totally irrational. At this stage, he can and often does adopt all foul means, all vicious methods, regardless of his previous good conduct as he acts to fulfill his desire. He can no longer curb his actions even when his personal safety is jeopardized. So the *Gita* says that when this last stage comes, even the person is destroyed.

From this projection it can be seen that when a person desires intensely, his desires and his lower ego become intermixed until there is a confusion of identity and he finds himself moving along a path of self-destruction. The more this lower ego is fed, the more speedily the higher ego will forget its true identity.

But what part, if any, does the ego play in the drama of life as it pushes towards the experience of Samadhi? It has been shown above that with the first dawn of consciousness, the ego and the senses of the human being play their necessary part in orienting man in self-consciousness. They protect him from physical dangers as he pushes onward in his evolution from the gross to the subtle. For the journey through the physical realm this ego in itself is not *bad* and the senses also are not *bad*; they are necessary tools of nature.

But when the inspiration of the soul is withdrawn by indulgence in gross, selfish desires, then the lower ego, having confused itself with something it is not, forgets its real identity. It has mixed itself up with its tools and identified itself with gross desires. It is then that the ego appears as the villain who is taking the individual consciousness along the path of destruction.

We can accurately describe the ego as the *I-thought* and awareness of individuality which is planted in us by nature. It is natural and necessary up to a certain point in evolution. In the early stage of human development it is a help; later, when the ego becomes an entity unto itself and

identifies wrongly with gross desires, it becomes a pseudo-ego and then an obstacle. It is this pseudo-ego, the lower ego, that takes man on the path to destruction.

The first step, then, is to realize that we are a victim of the pseudo-ego. Only then can we aspire to be free men living in the Divine Ego-consciousness. As long as we have any ego-consciousness, no matter how small, it is foolish for us to say that God does everything. As long as we have a consciousness of the *I-ness*, we have some ego. Even the slightest body desire is an ego desire. So long as man eats because he is hungry, sleeps because he is sleepy or thinks because he wants to know, he is acting from an *I*-consciousness. He cannot say it is God who is acting. To be a human being is to have an I-consciousness.

However, when this individual human focal point is merged, either temporarily or permanently, into Cosmic Consciousness, then it can be appreciated that Divinity is acting and the human form becomes only the chariot. This stage is not realized all at once. There is a stage in the spiritual development of the aspirant when he sometimes acts from a personal motive and sometimes on the level of Divinity.

Any high state of Samadhi is the state between human consciousness and Divine action. Only when the lower ego has been eliminated and the gross desires have been transcended can Samadhi be experienced. The ego-consciousness must reach beyond the pull of Nature. Sex, anger, greed, power and other desires lose their grip when Divinity is tasted. But how to transcend this pull of Nature is another question.

When we view the Cosmic Ego as one which is simply reflected in a multitude of finite egos, then we can suppose that this Cosmic Ego in itself has no desires, no lack, nor any necessities. Desire comes only in diversity. The finite human ego is that consciousness of *I-ness* which is identified with the individual self. It is this individual self or ego that has desires, and these multiply as the ego's individual consciousness grows stronger and stronger.

This localized action that gradually forms a strong individual ego carries with it the Samskaras (predispositions) of past lives. As the child grows to adolescence and on to adulthood, the individualized ego accumulates more and more desires to add to the desires already accumulated and unfulfilled in past lives. In this way, the desire-laden ego becomes more and more over-burdened with finite desires as the child advances in age.

It is this aspect of the ego that inspires it to develop a growing awareness. When the matured Johnny becomes fully conscious that it is only his mind that has mixed with the gross desires of the outside world and that he has wrongly identified himself with this, he first wants to shake off the pull of the outside world. Next comes the desire to play his part in the Cosmic Play consciously. The world then becomes the toy of the Divine Player and the individual ego dissolves His individual desires into the Cosmic Play.

Thus, when man begins to advance either through spiritual practices or in the natural course of evolution, he reaches a certain stage of subtlety. He begins to realize that the objects and desires which he so long wanted to enjoy and had looked upon as real are not only unreal, but also add impurities and bondage to his soul. When he goes deeper into spiritual life in one form or another, he gets a glimpse of Divinity. This first glimpse is the first experience of Samadhi. It is at this stage that this ego, this impure ego, this desire-laden ego, begins to fall through.

So the effect of Samadhi is a transformation of the impure ego to a state of purity. But, even then, unless Samadhi is firmly established in the devotee's life, he can again fall. Finally, there comes a time when he is fully conscious of the fact that his mind has mingled with the exterior world and this mingling culminates in desires that he feels in his ego; the first glimpse of a pure spiritual life comes when these desires are weeded out.

It is in this desire-free moment that Samadhi comes. Eventually this mood is experienced 24 hours a day. This Samadhi is of a higher form such as Savikalpa Samadhi and others. The former ego, that, through Samskaras (predispositions), was desire-ridden for so long, is still in danger of returning to its former state until Samadhi is firmly established. But while a person is in Samadhi he enjoys a state of having forgotten the desire world and he is touching the fringe of God-consciousness. When he is firmly established in Samadhi and has experienced a clear vision and experience of God-consciousness or God-realization then there is no chance of falling back to the original state of being in the grip of the desire-ego.

Sri Ramakrishna explained this by saying that a desire-laden ego is like a sword of steel made for fighting and cutting others. But when, by the touch of alchemy, the sword is converted into gold, even though it still retains the form of a sword, it cannot be used as before.

So after God-realization in the highest form of Samadhi, this ego cannot be used for serving worldly purposes. Generally, this is a progressive process and the ego dips for awhile in the gross world and then again in the spiritual world. The stages that come with the alchemy of spiritual practices cause the cells to change and the steel sword becomes a sword of gold.

Sri Ramakrishna also brings our attention to the Advaita Vedantists and their view of life. He says that it is premature and absurd to say, as the Advaita Vedantists do, that this world is unreal while we remain convinced that we ourselves are real.

A person who has not realized the Absolute cannot realize that the world is unreal. In other words, it is like the person who does not know what darkness is; he cannot say what light is. So, although the analogy is perhaps not quite expressive, the point is that unless you know and experience the highest thought of the Absolute or Unmanifested state of the highest Reality, how can you say the world in manifest form is unreal? When we reach

that state where the realization of the Absolute, Undifferentiated, Unmanifested Cosmic Reality is experienced, then—and then only—we have the right to say that this phenomenal world is unreal.

But if we look even deeper at this level of experience, this conclusion falls through. Sri Ramakrishna beautifully explains the truth of Divinity and the Cosmic play. First, as long as an individual's ego is viewed as real (meaning as long as we behold our own self and the objective world as real), this is reality for us even though it is temporary; for the time being there is reality to this mundane world. No doubt about it. But when we have experienced God-realization or God-as-the-Absolute, we may then say that the manifest world is no longer real. Even so, the previous realization of the phenomenal world was relatively true.

We may ask: "Who has created this ignorance on our part to view the worldly phenomena as real?" If it is a fact that we have the ignorance in ourselves which is responsible for our thinking that the phenomenal world is real, then this ignorance, although it may be temporary, is true. Since there is nothing outside this Absolute or Supreme Being, the existence of ignorance within us is also a part of God, or of the Absolute, or of the Supreme Being. This logic acts like a boomerang to the Advaita Vedantist point of view.

Therefore, Sri Ramakrishna beautifully reconciles these positions by saying that in ascending to God-realization this phenomenal world is gradually viewed or realized or experienced as not having higher values. In other words, the mundane world has less value and less importance.

True Samadhi is the experience of the state of God-realization or realization of the Absolute. When a person is returning from that state of Samadhi or God-realization, he gradually realizes while in this descending state that what he so long considered as unreal or relatively unreal has also been made from one universal matrix which is the Supreme Being. This manifestation is no doubt of lesser value or one might say is for a more gross

purpose. Nevertheless, the mundane world is here. It is not a sham.

So the existence of the phenomenal world *vis-a-vis* the Supreme Being is one. The manifest world and the Absolute are two sides of the One. In the physical world, however, values are based only on what human beings are able to appreciate and realize.

In short, nothing is unreal. The Supreme Being is perceived as the Absolute through the consummation of the higher values, especially the higher values of Truth, Beauty and Goodness. The consummation of these intrinsic values renders joy for their own sake. That which exists for its own value only and which renders good to others is of higher value and gives forth joy.

Whereas the values of lesser things, namely the values of the phenomenal world, the world of so-called *matter,* are only relative and impermanent. In other words, they are valued only so long as they are giving temporary physical or mental satisfaction. These values are called extrinsic values. We cater to them only as long as they give us temporary enjoyment. As we have noted many times before, the whole Cosmic World goes from gross to subtle, so the appreciation of values is also from the gross state to the subtle state. Thus, Sri Ramakrishna says that *unreality* only means having a lesser value.

The whole criterion of how the individual or ego views himself and his environment works together to establish his own personal values. The hierarchy of his values depends upon his awareness either in the mundane world or in the spiritual world. The experience of Samadhi, although a state without consciousness of the mundane world, presupposes an awareness of Divinity with or without form. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss the ramifications of consciousness and awareness.

There is a subtle difference between these two states. We can, for the purposes of this discussion, consider that consciousness is the knowledge or ability to act or react, while awareness is the self-conscious knowledge of something. In simple words, a person's body is conscious of

the cold and a further step comes when he is aware that his body is conscious of the cold. Awareness presupposes that the *I* consciousness is knowing what the body is experiencing.

Consciousness can be divided into several different states. There is supra-consciousness, consciousness, liminal consciousness, subconsciousness, unconsciousness and reflex action. In the subconscious state, the habitual actions—for example walking, talking, etc.—go on. The unconscious state is like sleep. The person is not self-conscious at all. In sleep, reflex action is still there even though there is no state of self-consciousness. In other words, if a mosquito bites a person, awake or asleep, he automatically reacts.

The unconsciousness in Samadhi is of a different and peculiar nature. Although in this state the aspirant enjoys a certain self-conscious awareness, he is completely unaware or unconscious as far as the external world is concerned. But in Nirvikalpa Samadhi there is something more: the physical body has no reflex action at all.

A person in this Samadhi simply does not respond to any stimuli. For example, if a person's eyes remain open when he is in this state, he neither blinks nor exhibits any other reflex action. If someone were to put his finger into the eye of a person who was in this deepest sublime state, even then there would be no reflex action. The action of the heart and lungs, which is also a reflex action, is slowed until its action is imperceptible. The body of a person in this deep state is almost like that of a dead man. There is no traceable action of the vital organs. If food or drink is poured into the mouth, it simply runs out again.

We find many witnesses and descriptions of Sri Ramakrishna in this state.

Practically speaking, there are four stages of awareness when viewed specifically from the angle of God-realization or of self-realization, which comes in the mood commonly known by most schools of thought as Samadhi. But we should not confuse a mental state with a

spiritual experience. In our mental life, we may experience unconscious awareness, conscious awareness and superconscious awareness.

A person might even come across a state of awareness during an unconscious state. For example, when a person gets a shock through medicines or drugs or electricity or any other physical or mental cause, he may lose consciousness. When this unconsciousness comes as a result of a stimulant, on regaining consciousness he might, and rather often does carry with him the impressions and memories of the mental realization of some fleeting events of the past or future, either real or imaginary.

Thus, even while a person is unconscious to the outer world, it is possible that he may be aware of something. When he comes to normalcy, the experience is like a dream.

Even if there is a realization of self or God or there is a mental vision of some spiritual object or place in this state, it should not be considered a state of Samadhi. He does not in this kind of unconsciousness have awareness of the supraconsciousness.

In other words, in Samadhi, for all intents and purposes, something must be consciously and deliberately done to achieve a fresh state of some new depth or realization. As we have repeatedly said, there must be an achievement of something higher, of some new thing or of some new ideal. Samadhi comes only through a conscious, deliberate effort wherein the mind is brought to a stage of equilibrium. Hence, by deadening the conscious life by shock or medicine, there cannot and does not come the state called Samadhi.

Again, we would like to emphasize that Samadhi is an experience on the supraconscious level, not on the subconscious level. Here we refer to our discussions of Samadhi found in Chapter 2. Since Samadhi is an experience on the spiritual level, the mental state of apparent equilibrium that comes through the use of drugs, medicines or through hypnosis is not to be

categorized as a proper Samadhi. In this conclusion we respectfully differ from the opinions of Patanjali as well as those of various modern scientists who have experimented along these lines.

They say that through drugs or hypnotism it is possible to attain a mental state of some higher spiritual value. This so-called *high state* has no doubt been induced in the research projects. The point to be emphasized here is simply that the state induced is on the psychic-mental plane and not on the spiritual level.

Both Patanjali in ancient times and the research workers today at Duke University do not hesitate to say that some kind of Samadhi or ultraconscious state can be achieved through both drugs and medicines and they include in drugs even those such as marijuana, hemp and hashish as well as hallucinogens like LSD, etc.

Our viewpoint of considering Samadhi as something more is based on the scriptures. Every recognized religion calls for a conscious effort to be made to control either directly or indirectly the physical and mental nature. Purity is necessarily a prerequisite and Samadhi is one of the beautiful fruits. This can be achieved through spiritual experiences and practices.

Discipline and practice prescribed by the various religions do shorten the process of evolution. These efforts done consciously and deliberately increase self-awareness on the supraconscious level. No experience on the unconscious and subconscious strata can give the same result. Sri Ramakrishna aptly expressed the goal of evolution by saying that eventually everyone will realize God, but some may realize sooner, some later. Whatever the case, it is something to be achieved in the process of evolution.

In other words, God-realization is the natural culmination of the movement that comes in the process of Cosmic evolution wherein the mind is to become more and more subtle. When man's consciousness matures into subconsciousness and then further matures into higher

consciousness, man then tries to shorten the course of evolution by joyfully and peacefully and harmoniously transcending the natural course of evolution.

This cannot be achieved through directly opposing evolution or by temporarily stopping this Cosmic movement through some artificial means just to get a glimpse of the whole show. Spiritual enjoyment comes automatically through practicing religion in some form or other. This is a conscious and deliberate act of self-discipline and self-giving practiced with the aim of attaining some higher spiritual state.

However, when ultraknowledge seems to be attained by making the mind calm through use of hypnosis, drugs or medicines, it can at best be considered only as a pseudo-Samadhi. Any experience thus gained is simply a replay of something achieved in the past.

Samadhi, by its nature, brings a new dimension of awareness in the life of the experiencer and we might go so far as to say, in the life of the whole of humanity. For what is achieved by one individual affects all humanity and is achievable by all humanity at some point in space and time.

This point will become more clear as the implication of Samadhi is gradually expounded. Let us simply emphasize here that Samadhi presupposes a conscious awareness of Divinity in some form or another, or without form.

CHAPTER 4

NATURE, SEX AND SAMADHI

It has already been explained that the goal of the Divine Play is for the soul to extricate itself from the grasp of nature and again find its freedom in Divine Joy, which in a matured state is Samadhi.

Nature's power over man is necessary, as we have explained in the previous chapter, to provide man with the vehicle and quality he needs for his journey to Infinity. Nature is also the power that stands as the obstruction that keeps man from reaching this goal quickly and joyfully. Nature's job is to keep the soul bound to form.

As death of the physical form is inevitable, Nature's first job is to implant into every living form the desire to create new forms to replace the old. But as the play must go on to new dimensions, the soul cannot and should not stay stuck in the human kingdom playing nature's game forever. It must continue the journey to Infinity and, if possible, in a unique and beautiful way, and not through the beaten track of Nature. The soul is to find new and more subtle fields in which to play.

So, deep in the soul there is the realization that there is something more to be enjoyed in a dimension beyond this physical world. The soul is always lured onward by something, and that something is the desire to experience

Divine Joy and Samadhi. Only when the soul is at least temporarily free from the grip of the senses, can the devotee get the first glimpse; and with this first experience comes the soul's urge to extricate itself completely from its involvement in nature. Then it is motivated to give up the Nature world with all its temporary pleasures and pains so it can play in a more subtle world of Divine and eternal joy.

But Nature is mischievous. She stands aside and watches Her play. If it were not for Nature's play, the creative process would not go on. This creative need or instinct is planted in the human heart. This instinct is all too often mistaken for love. Unless we as human beings succumb to the urge to procreate, creation of new bodies would stop. Nature plays this urge for creation as her trump card. As ordinary human beings, it is natural and necessary for us to submit to this force. Otherwise we would not indulge in the sex act.

Nature uses sex to make her process go on and on. It is natural for us to subjugate ourselves to this scheme of Nature until the play is to stop . . . or to move ahead. Nature's job, then, is to make the sex play exciting and alluring. But if the sexual act itself is observed objectively, all will agree that it has no charm at all when it is viewed merely as bodily contact. It is only when the partners forget that they are uniting their bodies through their excretory organs that the charm of their senses comes into play. The aversion to bodily contact through these eliminative openings, which are otherwise used to expel waste matter, melts into oblivion.

Look at the contradiction Nature has imposed upon Herself! From one angle of vision the sex act is an undesirable, unpleasant contact. From another angle, the sex act takes man into an ecstatic mood of enjoyment. Even when the ecstatic mood is not achieved, at least it gives physical satisfaction and relief. These rewards, however charming, are temporary and fickle. The primitive, unenlightened, extroverted man asks few questions. He is

satisfied simply to act and react, thus encouraging and intensifying his involvement. But man is also given the faculty to extricate himself from Nature's grasp. It is this urge to escape Nature's prison that pushes him to new dimensions of understanding.

Nature is continually tempting us to procreate through sex. Because Nature does not want the show to stop, it introduces art into its field. Man's higher aspiration compels him to bring art into the act of living and then Nature uses this vehicle of higher aspiration to hold him in Her clutches. When man begins to extricate himself from his animalistic nature, unless woman makes her appearance beautiful, he will not indulge in sex.

Hence, we find an unlimited market in the cosmetic field. Lipstick and other beauty aids are a result of this call of Nature to attract the other sex. In order to attract man into the process of creation, various techniques of expression have been developed by woman over the ages without their ever realizing the cause. Sometimes even a veil is used. In this practice, woman is made more attractive through the mystery of not being seen. Beauty is here under cover! Thus, woman allures through mystery, and the veil is opened only when her mate comes to fulfill the excitement of sex, either gross or subtle.

When the veil is removed, the woman intuitively and instinctively makes herself attractive one way or another without her conscious knowledge. Seldom does she realize that she is a slave of Nature and motivated by Nature to satisfy sex *only* for procreation. As the man gets used to her beauty, the woman must seek new ways to attract him. She begins to expose herself in various ways. Again it is the drive of Nature that motivates.

So the whole drive in mundane life is sex and, without knowing it, mankind serves the procreative purpose of Nature by succumbing to this urge, however subtle may be the participation. The male partner also, in his own way, plays the same game to attract the opposite sex.

As we have shown above, Nature's job is to keep the

soul attached as long as she can to the body form through the senses. The goal of the Divine play, however, is for the soul to extricate itself from the grasp of Nature and to find its freedom in Divine joy. Hence, at some point in man's evolution we find a disenchantment with his natural way of life.

Man does not or cannot realize this Divine joy in the form of Samadhi until or unless he can extricate himself from this bondage of Nature. However, little if anything is gained by forced celibacy which ignores the sex urge that man inevitably finds in one form or another in every cell of his body. This facet of man's nature is to be transformed and transcended, not repressed. To use sex artfully and more subtly is the ideal. Man can use this sex urge in his nature to find subtle sex relationship with Divinity.

But before that point is developed, it can be asked why should man give up sex which he finds so charming, since it is obviously an important activity of Nature. However, boredom comes all too soon. If we view this play of sex impartially, we can see the constant urgency for introducing some new angle of attraction and expression to ward off the boredom that inevitably comes to dissolve the charm. We should appreciate that sex in itself is not a goal that satisfies.

The Hindu scriptures give a hint. When man and woman come together to experience on the soul level, such blissful Divine joy permeates every cell in their bodies that the physical satisfaction enjoyed in the sex act involving bodily touch becomes insipid. With this spiritual union, each cell dances individually with joy. This communion can be with Divinity itself or with the spiritual partner, but as long as man is trapped by Nature, he will continue to act and react on body-to-body level to the sex impulse he finds in his physical cells.

When he appreciates the goal of union on the spiritual plane, he will participate in sex only when his physical body demands, and will at the same time endeavor to

transcend this urge, so that he can play at the spiritual level where there is more joy. Samadhi is the next step that comes when the lower sensual desires are transformed.

It must be always remembered that the old has to be sacrificed for the new. As we have mentioned above, the Cosmic Plan is for each soul to grow more and more subtle as it experiences God-realization. As the individual soul travels along its evolutionary journey through the process of reincarnation, it finds that from time to time it is attracted to other souls. At first they find their affinity for each other through art, Yoga, money, sports, etc. Through this affinity they begin to gather together, growing near to one another, first as group to group, perhaps 20 to 20, then 10 to 10, then 5 to 5, etc. As the soul grows more and more subtle, the groups become smaller and smaller and only those who have closest affinity will stick together. These deep associations carry over from one incarnation to another. These relationships can be woman to woman, man to man, and man to woman; the soul has no sex.

In each facet of life, there is a hierarchy of experience. The sex relationship eventually serves a higher purpose of more lasting value. Man finds in himself an urge for a soul mate.*

He longs for a companion soul with whom he can discover and experience the majorities of the Cosmic play. He desires someone who will play with him in the Cosmic show. Even with a soul mate, the ideal starts with some attraction on the physical and mental plane. However, there is also some higher affinity.

In the ensuing play, it is as if the sky is reflected in two dew drops at the same time. But no two dew drops, however near one another, can reflect in exactly the same

*Two souls who enjoy Divinity side by side, who have a close affinity to one another and who reflect Divinity in a similar manner are called soul mates.

way. There is never an identity of any two things. So each soul reflects Divinity in its own original way. The joy of this high relationship is devoid of the desire or need for bodily contact. A child enjoys simple toys in his infancy, but loses the urge for them when new toys more suitable to his age are offered. When we begin to recognize Nature's mischievous plan to attract and hold us and begin to perceive the higher goal, then we are well on our way to a new dimension.

Now these two forces, namely the force of nature and the force of spiritual aspiration, play against each other as man tries to free himself for his onward journey. These forces which are always working simultaneoulsy are in physical terms called the centrifugal and centripetal forces. In the terminology of the Yogi these two forces which work by the dictates of Nature are called Ida (thought) and Pingala (action) currents. The Pingala current works out what Nature commands. But prior to this action commanded by Nature, the Ida current has its work to do.

In other words, the action is as follows: idea is created in our mind, which evolves either through suggestion, by thought or through impressions from an internal organ or stimulation from external agencies. From this thought, we act as nature dictates; in the domain or activity of the nerve current this is called the Ida.

The Yogis find this subtle nerve current in the left side in the spinal column. All thinking processes are in the domain of the Ida. Thought is the forerunner of action. If this thought activity becomes oppressive and vehement, man loses his balance or judgment as a rational being, and feels the urge to translate this thought into action whatever may be the result.

The domain of action is in the Pingala which is located in the right side inside the spinal column. When thought transfers into action the Pingala comes into play. In between these two nerve currents, the Ida and Pingala, there is what is known as the Sushumna. This Sushumna

current is mostly Sattvic (pure and balanced) in nature. When neither the Ida nor Pingala is predominant the current acts through the Sushumna.

We can use our powers of judgment to great advantage only when we are in a balanced state of mind with the separate actions of the Ida and Pingala merged into the calm state of Sushumna. Until discipline of mind is achieved and, following this, a desire for spiritual values comes to mature man, he is not in a position to act in a rational way for his greatest good and for the good of all humanity.

When this Ida and Pingala are working in their own way at the beck and call of Nature, the Yogis say that the Kundalini (Cosmic force condensed in human body and sometimes called the *serpent power*) is sleeping. In this state, the most subtle life force remains inactive. It does not operate at all in the Sushumna channel. The Ida is the first nerve current to be activated and controlled. The Pingala is the second nerve current and the Sushumna is the third current. Until the Ida and Pingala are brought to a state of balance, the Sushumna channel remains unused or inactive.

Thus, we see how the balance of mind and action is the first prerequisite of pursuing spiritual life and attaining any kind of Samadhi.

We may mention here that the Gayatri Mantram (Mantram developed by ancient Rishis with ideal for gaining perfect knowledge) held this ideal of a balanced mind and action as the primary consideration for any spiritual progress. With this balance comes the power to act through the discriminative factor (Buddhi). In using the Gayatri Mantram, the Rishis envoked no other boon from the Cosmic source except to get a balanced state of mind and to act with the best judgment through the faculty of the mind called the Buddhi.

In fact this Buddhi is really the *Bodhi* which, when achieved, becomes the Buddha or the enlightened one. When Buddha, after struggling with satanic forces (called Mar), overpowered them and attained a balanced state of

mind, his ability to work according to the highest wisdom (discriminative faculty) was firmly established. He who had been known as Gautama became Buddha.

This state of balance is a sort of Samadhi. The moment a person is relieved of the pull of nature on the physical plane, there is a pause, a state of vacuum. When this state comes, the person can either fall back upon the pull of Nature again, or go onward to higher values. This is Samadhi as experienced on the physical plane.

There is another higher state achieved when Samadhi is experienced at the space between the Pranamayakosha (vital sheath) and Manomayakosha (mental sheath). Here again there is a struggle to hold on to the experience, and the aspirant may fall to Nature's play or may rise to the next step.

On the mental plane of action, he finds a struggle going on within himself between two sets of thought. One thought pulls him again to Nature's play and the other pulls him to higher spiritual values. Through Yogic practices and mental disciplines, he can succeed more easily in resisting the downward pull of Nature.

Between the Manomayakosha and Vijnanamayakosha (wisdom sheath) there is a higher state of Samadhi. At this stage the aspirant has firmly established the discriminative power within himself, but even here there is a chance for his fall. Here it is the temptation of greed and lust, or he may succumb to the evil effects of egotism. Spiritual pride is a most vicious enemy to the aspirant. When this level is attained, special care should be taken to be more humble and, preferably, to be less in the public eye. Cheap applause and eulogy can puff the ego of a saint to a fall.

There are glaring examples of this found in the lives of two Rishis of ancient times. Rishi Durbasa and, to a lesser degree, Rishi Viswamitra, both known to students of Indian philosophy, were very high in the attainment of spiritual values. Yet they both yielded to an egotistic state of mind and met with pitfalls. Even though they might

have attained a lower form of Samadhi, the higher stages of Samadhi were denied them because for a long period they were not able to transform their egotistic nature.

When the barrier between the mental sheath (Manomayakosha) and the Buddhi Sheath (Vijnanamayakosha) is crossed and the aspirant comes to the pause between the Buddhi and the Anandamayakosha (divine ecstasy or bliss) there is less chance to fall down. Nature's play is less eventful here. In fact, in the Sahaja Samadhi that is attained in the pause between the Vijnanamayakosha and Anandamayakosha there is little or no chance to succumb to the pull of Nature.

Thus, from the most gross state of the pull of Nature right up to the highest state, there is a series of plateaus where there is a balanced state of mind. At each level of consciousness, at each state of realization there comes a halt or pause wherein there is a balanced state of mind that we call Samadhi.

These are graded from gross to subtle. In the highest state of pause the cells and the body as a whole are then entirely Divinized. This state in the Hindu scriptures is called Bhagabati Tanu.

When this state of Samadhi is achieved, the body becomes pure and rarefied and it can then contain the inrush of divine bliss and joy. But what then?

That is another story which we shall presently relate.

CHAPTER 5

THE PLAY OF PRANA AND KOSHAS IN SAMADHI

Samadhi cannot be fully understood either as a state or as a process until the value and action of Prana is appreciated.

When Cosmic Ideation pulsates into integration, into maintenance and into disintegration in the so-called universe, it is generally known in the Indian scriptures as Prana. In fact, Prana and Cosmic Ideation and Cosmic Conscious Energy are all synonymous.

When we look upon this Cosmic Principle at its source in its unmanifested state, it is *Cosmic Ideation*. When we look upon this Supreme Principle as the power to create forms, this author calls it *Cosmic Conscious Energy*. When we consider this Principle in its manifestation as it pulsates or takes shapes or forms in the so-called physical show, or when we look to phenomena that are created through the process of integration, maintenance and disintegration, it is *Prana*.

For convenience, when Prana is considered in its totality, it is called *The Prana*. When it is considered in its further activities in human beings, as well as in other organic existences, it is called simply *prana*. According to the particular action it forces, this prana is again divided into five pranas: prana, apana, samana, vyana, and udana. Again, when this Cosmic Ideation, or Prana, or Cosmic

Conscious Energy is looked upon as a Person, it is called God.

So, virtually, there is no difference between the Cosmic Ideation or Cosmic Conscious Energy, or The Prana, or God or prana as it is termed when the individualized action of this force is considered. The different names are determined only by the various angles and different contexts.

To summarize, Prana is to be viewed from different angles. Capital letters have been used to distinguish the various views.

The Prana:	Cosmic Conscious Energy in its totality as it pulsates.
Prana:	Vital force pulsating through Form and the Vital force condensed in form
prana:	Specific actions of the vital force known as Prana

1. prana (integration)
2. apana (elimination)
3. samana (even distribution)
4. vyana (distribution and/or circulation)
5. udana (eruption)

Samadhi, as we have said before, is a state which may be described as the halting station in the journey of The Prana. The soul in its flight from one form to another, from one stage of attainment in evolution to a next stage, experiences the mysteries of Cosmic creation, preservation and disintegration as it takes various shapes through this evolutionary process.

Through this, the Cosmic Energy or Prana, after multi-

plication, takes the forms of souls which find their place in vast numbers of diminutive forms. These Pranas eventually reach the state of the human being. After this, the soul pauses awhile, so to speak, and first looks back at the distance it has traveled in preparation for the journey to come.

This is a state of equilibrium wherein the individual human soul tries to collect itself for a moment, to prepare for its flight into a higher state of subtlety. In this pause there is a transformation of the physical cells to enable the soul to go on to a new existence in a new body.

Only by attaining a state of equilibrium in mental life can the soul simultaneously survey its past journey, take stock of its present abilities and efforts and look to the horizon for the new goal to achieve. Then only can it ready itself for the next flight.

In this way, the soul prepares over and over again to fly always higher into Infinite space. This pause, this halting station is called Samadhi. In reality, life is the play of The Prana (Cosmic Conscious Energy) through all the Prana (Cosmic Energy in pulsation) as it acts through prana (Cosmic Energy pulsating through individual form) to propel the soul onward and upward. Prana, therefore, is the key to the relationship of our individual life-force with Cosmic Energy.

Prana acts in specific ways in the process of attaining Samadhi. Sri Ramakrishna stated that a person going into Samadhi sometimes acts like a ghoul, a madman or a child. In the highest state he becomes stupified. His whole body becomes inert. In this latter stage of Samadhi prana ceases to act. It lies in a dormant state in the body.

In the deeper stages of Samadhi, for example, the heart stops. As the aspirant gradually calms down the breathing apparatus, which is the crudest manifestation of prana, the other finer apparatuses will stop. In the last state the most subtle apparatus of prana will stop; at this time the prana, being in a dormant state, does not work through the body, which stays in a state of suspended animation that is similar to and at the same time different

from the hibernation of bears and other animals which act automatically in response to their physical nature.

The difference in the case of the spiritual aspirant is that when the Samadhi state is over and the mind gradually comes back to normal, the return to normalcy always brings with it a new dimension.

That the body can sustain life in this state of suspended animation was proven before Western witnesses. Some years back an Indian King, Ranjit Singh, invited Westerners to verify that a certain Yogi who had practiced and perfected certain body disciplines of Hatha Yoga could be buried under the earth for six months and still live. After he sat himself carefully in a pit several feet deep, the earth was packed around him and on top of him. Then the topsoil was cultivated and some seeds were planted.

In six months, after the crop was harvested, the earth was removed and some ghee and herbs were rubbed in special places on the body. Gradually, the body that had been completely cold for months except for a slight warmth in the heart region came back to normal functioning. Even though the mind was in this inert state for so long, it showed no evidence of deterioration.

In this case, the suspended animation was brought on by certain Yogic practices aimed only at suspending life. This practice does not give the fruits of spiritual practices which lead to higher spiritual attainment, but they are proof that human life can be sustained in a state of hibernation. However, the activity of the lungs, heart, etc., slows down and may even seem to come to a halt in the natural course of Samadhi.

When the Samadhi is to come to an end, it is the mind that gives an impact to the prana to start normal functioning again. This effect is much like the shock treatment given to the heart patient, but, in the case of Samadhi, it is the higher mind—or in other words the soul—that tends to act to restore the organism to its normal activity when an aspirant remains too long in this inanimate state.

The restoration to normalcy can be aided by the same artificial means as mentioned in the case of the Hatha Yogi who had been buried for six months.

There are two stages relative to the experience of Samadhi. One is the ascending stage to Samadhi and the other is the descending stage. As prana always acts in a specific directional pattern in the process of achieving Samadhi, both of these stages can be seen as the experience of crossing the barriers of the Koshas (coverings of the soul) or sheaths.

As we have mentioned earlier, man has five sheaths or Koshas. The fifth and most gross is Annamayakosha. This sheath is the gross physical sheath and is sustained by food. It is the outermost cover of the soul.

The fourth one is called Pranamayakosha. This is the sheath which is sustained by or composed mainly of Prana (vital) energy; and only a limited Prana comes directly from gross foods. That this sheath depends only partially on food can be observed when the body is deprived of it for seven days. The prana won't completely go even then; some vitality remains, although without food, it tends to gradually lose its direction and power. Though energy withers away and there is decay, nevertheless the body is sustained.

Thus, in the Pranamayakosha it can be seen that the power of prana depends partially on Cosmic Energy per se and partly on the Cosmic Energy that has been converted from food for use in the body functions.

The third, second and first Koshas are more subtle. The third sheath is called Manomayakosha. This is the body of the soul that is made of mind-stuff only. The second Kosha is called Vijnanamayakosha. This is the body of the soul that is composed of knowledge. It is this intellectual state of the soul that is wisdom, Supreme Consciousness.

This wisdom of the soul ultimately knows itself and at the same time is in touch with the external world. In other words, in the Vijnanamayakosha there is conscious-

ness both of the external world and at the same time of its Divine aspects. The first Kosha is called Anandamayakosha; it is the sheath that feels blissful joy only.

As we go into deep meditation, we gradually become forgetful of our body, then of the vital functions in the body, then of the functioning of the mind. Gradually there is only a consciousness of knowledge. Eventually this awareness goes and there is only a full blissful state of joy in which the soul comes to experience its own real, essential nature; it ceases to think, ceases to consider the external world, but enjoys the full bliss and peaceful state that is its own real nature.

This is a state of Samadhi. In this state, soul is not conscious either of itself or of the external world, and the prana that has been sustaining the outer physical function of the body is no longer active.

The soul rises slowly through these various sheaths as the consciousness pauses to play at each level. When it rises above the body consciousness, it gives up the working of the heart, the lungs, etc. Next it gives up the mind and the feeling that *I am thinking*. Then it next transcends the knowledge that *I am soul* and it even forgets that *I am a conscious resplendent body*.

This is the last stage where the aspirant is aware of joy only. This is why the pictures taken of Sri Ramakrishna in this supreme state of Divine joy show his face smiling and beaming. This joy can also be observed in the expression in the photos of Lahiri Mahasaya, as well as in some other saints living today.

This experience of ascending to Samadhi through the five sheaths is called Anulom. It is the experience of gradually ridding the self of the body consciousness, the consciousness of the activity of prana, the mind's consciousness of itself, the consciousness of knowledge and self until there is only an awareness of indescribable joy.

Naturally, there must also be a descending state. This is called Bilom. When the consciousness is again finding its way to the external world, first it is aware that *I was so long in a blissful state*. This is a stepping down on the

first rung of the ladder on the way back to the mundane plane. There is the realization that *I am no longer in the blissful state*. The second stage is the consciousness that it, the soul, was for so long in a blissful state.

The third stage is when the person realizes that he was so long in a blissful state and is now conscious that he himself is thinking these things. When he is partially conscious of his mental activities and mental modifications, he has come down to the mental state. Then he begins to be conscious that he is conscious and that he, the soul, was for so long in a blissful state.

Next, he begins to be conscious that he is breathing and he begins to gasp for breath. He is conscious that his heart had almost stopped. He has then come down to the pranic state, i.e., to the Pranamayakosha.

It was at this state, when the pranic activity was being restored to its normal activity that Sri Ramakrishna said that he wanted to drink water.

The last step is when the aspirant begins to feel and to regain consciousness of the body. With this experience, normalcy slowly comes.

One pertinent question is left to be discussed about Koshas or sheaths, and Prana. If the Prana is the ultimate state of matrix pulsation, where do Koshas or sheaths come from? Neither can there be nor is there any reality to the conception of ultimate duality in our universe.

As we have explained above, it is the same energy or The Prana that is condensed into the form of some gross thing in the journey through evolution and it is the same Prana that also acts or motivates these manifestations to work. This concept is similar to that of modern physicists who say that on ultimate analysis the electrons and protons and neutrons form a minute revolving universe within the atom. The driving force is the same energy penetrating in and outside this universe.

This same principle was explained thousands of years ago in the *Vedas*. The example was used of a spider who spins his cobweb out from his own body. He then rests and works on it. The ultimate Cosmic Principle or Energy

works in this same way. The *Upanishads* have also propounded this principle. All these points of view converge to support one theory that we also advance: The Prana evolves out of the Cosmic matrix itself and then acts to form the different Koshas, and thereafter also acts as the energy or pranas that work through these Koshas or sheaths. There is no contradiction at all.

In the above it has been explained clearly how the soul transcends through the Koshas, one after another, to find its own resplendent nature. This process takes the soul to the Anandamayakosha to merge through Samadhi into Infinity. To put it a different way, the Prana returns through the Koshas to play with Infinity.

Volumes of books have been written on this subject from the angle of vision and experience of the Jnana Yogis, the Raja Yogis or the Bhakta Yogis. However, one singular aspect is missing in them. None have established whether or not there is really a separate and detached existence of these Koshas, or whether they are attached to or intermingled with one another.

Does the soul pass from one cloud to another or does the soul rise from one story to another when we transcend the Koshas, one at a time as we take our spiritual flight to Infinity? For example, St. Theresa of Avila describes her spiritual journey as passing from one chamber to another in her book, *Interior Castles.*

Without delving more deeply into a debatable argument, we would like to point out our own view. Whether or not these different aspects are called Koshas, sheaths, castles or something else, they are not to be considered as something separate from the whole body or Cosmos. It is our body in its entirety that is the chariot or the vehicle of the soul.

Although this body contains the several sheaths or Koshas or castles, there is no water-tight division, one from another. The reason is simple: as explained above, the Prana is one energy, in reality indivisible, although it operates in the different parts and with the different func-

tions of the body in more or less separate or distinct activity.

Nevertheless, this prana as a whole is acting in five facets in the human body which we, for convenience, distinguish as prana, apana, etc. These are simply different terminologies to show the various diverse ways the Prana is acting when it is viewed as prana pulsating through a form. So really it is The One Prana, this Cosmic force which is integrated and focused and localized in the body, and it is this energy that operates and functions through the whole body.

So long as our leg or toe remains a part of our whole body, we can never say that the five pranas are not functioning there and are acting only in the brain or lung or heart. Of course, its activity may be more intensified or centralized in the cerebrospinal axis, but pranas are also acting in the toe simultaneously, although in a less concentrated manner.

Similarly the mind, or Manomayakosha, does not exist in the brain or in the heart alone. Rather it is present all through the body system even though the main center may be considered to be located in the brain. In the same way, when there is an inrush of higher knowledge or wisdom in the Vijnanamayakosha, this impact is felt not only in the brain but also in a diffused way in other parts of the body; similarly, Anandamayakosha, which is the Kosha wherein the feeling of blissful joy is centered, is not located in the heart only but permeates through the whole body system. (Often it has been observed that the hair stands on end when a person is in this exalted state of bliss.)

It will not be off the point here to say that the *Mahat* or *Mahavideha Bhava* or *Buddhi* or the supraself-conscious state of *I-ness* in the body that leads to the consciousness of the soul as *I-ness*—although said to be felt in the heart or brain region, is really felt throughout the body as a whole. It can be noted that when there is a sense of ego or *I-ness*, this sense of the soul does not pertain to one part of the body only, but to it as a whole.

A pertinent objection may be raised by the Vedantists, who cite the scriptures to say that the soul is the size of a thumb dwelling in the heart region. We shall make a mistake if we put a spaciotemporal restriction to this location of the soul. Looking further into the *Upanishads* and the *Vedas*, we find it said that the Atman or soul is present everywhere. It is here and there permeating every corner. Although it is stationary, it moves faster than mind. When we take the scriptures as a whole, we can see that the soul is not to be described or conceived in three dimensions or in any spaciotemporal relationship.

Keeping these factors in mind, we are now in a comfortable position to appreciate that the process of maturing through spiritual practices, wherein the Prana goes from the physical sheath or the Annamayakosha to the Pranamayakosha to the Manomayakosha, etc.,—from gross to subtle—involves a change in man as a whole. In this transcendental state or transformation which takes place, even the physical cells of the body undergo a change.

What is it that actually happens during such transcending movements? The grosser sheaths get less Prana activity and mental contribution. The higher and deeper and more subtle a person becomes, the less he is attentive to the lower rungs of the ladder which he has left behind. The grosser sheaths then find less impetus to act.

To put it in other words, the Cosmic force finds it easier and happier to play in higher and higher sheaths and, as the spiritual practices begin to bear fruit, the lower sheaths become less active and less operative.

We find this true in ordinary mundane life. A person who is active on the physical level fails to perform deeply in mental activity and vice versa. Then, when the intuitive stage is reached, the rational activity of the mind also stops. As the nature becomes even more subtle, the vital action barely acts at all.

It is with caution that we should come to the obvious

conclusion, i.e., that only in the highest Samadhi the other vital actions almost completely stop.

This is no doubt true, but it is not the whole story. In the space between the activity of each Kosha there is a state of equilibrium that brings about a state of inactivity. We have, in the previous pages, cited the case of the Hatha Yogi who voluntarily and with intent brought about this state of inactivity.

This same state wherein vitality stops is likely to come whenever Prana comes to a stationary position of quiescence between any two Koshas; thus, whenever this state is observed, it is important to evaluate other factors which will reveal just where in the hierarchy of spiritual attainment this experience has come. It is the activity in the Koshas that gives the clue.

We have already discussed in detail how Prana, through spiritual practices, gradually withdraws first from the Annamayakosha, then from the Pranamayakosha, etc., until gradually a point is reached where there is only Pranic activity in the Anandamayakosha. Now let us examine this process in a bit more detail.

Prana reaches the stage where it is withdrawn from the Annamayakosha, and, before it has been intensely activated in the Pranamayakosha, there is a moment of tranquility that comes from this attunement. When a person experiences this tranquillity, it is only natural that he wants to prolong the mood. For example, the goal of the Hatha Yogi is to attain Jada or Hata Samadhi. This is the tranquillity which is experienced when Prana is resting between the Annamayakosha and the Pranamayakosha.

Now, since Samadhi is a state of spiritual joy and experience, and since man—until his concentration is well developed on the mental plane—cannot experience the spiritual plane, this author does not consider the tranquil state between the physical and vital sheaths as a true Samadhi, however peaceful a state it may be. But of

course, it is one rung on the ladder of higher values and experiences.

The tranquil stage experienced when Prana is passing from the Pranamayakosha to the Manomayakosha can be considered only the lowest or first state of Samadhi. As we have said before, unless the mind has been brought to a state of stillness through the conscious volition of the aspirant, even this stage should at best be termed as a lesser Samadhi. When this tranquillity has been consciously achieved, than the aspirant is on the first rung of the spiritual ladder.

Even at the first or second rung, there may be some show of Siddhis (occult powers). For example, some clairvoyance or clairaudience can come. Although these powers may come automatically, they can also be cultivated when there is some power of concentration on some prescribed object in the mental plane.

In this connection, it may be interesting to note one of the author's experiences when he was a very young man. One day, when he was sitting at a railway station in a meditative posture and a tranquil mood, suddenly before his eyes—just as if he were looking at a cinema screen—he saw the following moving picture: one of his friends, who was at that moment not in the position or mood for marriage at all, boarded a bus with his newly-married wife and their relations and friends.

The author especially took note of the particular color of the sarees and dresses of the men of the party, which are always gay and festive during the marriage celebrations. Some months later the friend's circumstances changed and the author witnessed with surprise that he himself was one of the wedding party boarding the bus with the groom and the bride, together with the other friends and relatives he had seen on his own "cinema screen" some months back. Everything that was happening at that moment tallied exactly with what he had seen before, including the colors and designs of the sarees.

A few years later, when his Yogic practices were intensified, he developed the ability of concentrating his thought in such a way that he could at will see events of the future. Fortunately for his spiritual life, he came to appreciate before he had become helplessly involved that these powers were not only of a lower nature, being characteristic of the state between the Pranamayakosha and the Manomayakosha, but that they were a positive threat to any future spiritual development.

It may again be noted here that between every Kosha or sheath, there is some kind of Samadhi that fits the attainment of that grade or state. At the lower levels, the visions in these moods are seen with the subtle sense organs. Sometimes the events in the life of some individual come to be known and at a bit higher level, some world events may be viewed. All that is necessary is to tune the mind to a state of tranquillity between the Koshas. Even through the grace of God alone sometimes we can have a look.

Some (not all) of the major incidents in the lives of all individuals as well as certain world events are already fixed by past Karmas which are bound to be fulfilled at a particular point in time. The imprint has already been made in the Cosmic Idea World. With all these factors in mind, there is little difficulty in appreciating that it is possible to witness events in the world that have not yet happened.

There is one question, however, that has not been answered. How can we *see* with our own eyes, so to say, something physical that has not yet manifested? The clue is given in the *Gita*, Chapter II, verse 8 where Arjuna was granted the boon to witness the Cosmic revelation, the Divine revelation, as It manifests through the stages of creation. Krishna—referring to Himself as the Cosmic Revelation—tells Arjuna: "But you cannot see Me with these eyes of yours. I give you Divine power of sight; behold my Supreme Yoga."

Besides both the physical sight and the memory of it

that is known to all, there is a potential subtle sight, to see subtle things. It is this factor that is the key to experiences many have had, similar to that described by the author.

It is through subtle sight that future events are seen; but these experiences cannot be considered spiritual in nature.

However, when the tranquil state between the Vijnanamayakosha and the Anandamayakosha is experienced, there comes a still more subtle power to see even more subtle things. It is on this plane that Divine revelations are seen with Divine insight. Sri Ramakrishna has said many times that God is both with form and without form, and can be actually experienced in His formless aspect as well as in form.

When the reality of this most subtle spiritual sight is experienced, then the reality and satisfaction of physical sight fades away. Even less subtle sights described above fade and a new kind of vision is enjoyed. This vision does not originate from the areas of the eye sense organs. In a mysterious way, it takes its form in the current of the Sushumna passage; all that can be said about such a vision is that we will know when we have seen. Herein lies the clue to the hierarchy of Samadhi.

To summarize, Samadhi gives certain fruits according to the subtlety of the Samadhi. Further, something new on the spiritual level comes out of a spiritual Samadhi.

It should be remembered that no kind of Samadhi is a final stage by itself. No doubt it offers its supreme sense of bliss and divine joy, but that is not all it gives—it always opens a new vista.

CHAPTER 6
PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF SAMADHI

To many persons who are following the spiritual path, it may seem to be a misconception to consider that Samadhi has any direct effect on the physical plane. Whatever may be the definition, connotation or denotation of the term *Samadhi,* all will agree that it relates principally to the realization of God or the realization of Self or the attainment of something high of spiritual value. Therefore, to consider Samadhi as having any involvement on the physical level may not be welcome to many.

Nevertheless, we should not ignore the physical aspect. To be more precise, the function of the physical body changes as and when Samadhi comes. It is not controversial that the effect of environment contributes and perhaps even provides the basic function for any higher spiritual realization, and Samadhi is, of course, included. The crucial problem is not in the appreciation of this concept. It is not usually denied that there must be some preparation on the physical plane for higher realization to come.

The physical requirements leading to Samadhi have been discussed in the *Gita,* in the *Kathopanishad,* in Samkhya Yoga, in Buddhism and of course in Vedanta Philosophy and in Tantra. These systems all show that

the whole object of spiritual practice is to prepare the body, mind and intuition to be a good receptacle for holding higher and more subtle values. Thus, gradual purification comes and when desires go, the body becomes a fit container. How to accomplish these achievements will be discussed further in chapter seven dealing with the different schools of thought and the purification that comes with their specific practices.

Taking all schools of thought into consideration, it has been seen that each school has its own aim or goal. Hatha Yoga prepares the body and nerves and to an extent the mind. Raja Yoga takes this lead and further develops the control over activities of pranas and nerve currents, making the body strong and fit enough to absorb the Divine rush coming thereafter from higher spiritual practices.

At this stage, the movement may take different angles or directions. It may go through Karma Yoga (volitional) or it may be through Jnana Yoga (intellectual). It may go through purely Bhakti Yoga (devotional) or it may go in a mixed path of Jnaṇa and Bhakti, such as Tantra.

At a certain stage in each practice from Hatha Yoga upwards, some kind of Samadhi comes. It is in Samadhi that one force, the lower force, is dissolved or one might say converted and reconstituted into a higher force. In other words, the nerve currents playing in the physical strata are converted to play on the intellectual plane. Next this energy is converted to play on the intuitional plane until the stage comes when all the energy is playing on the highest spiritual plane. This is just another way of explaining that in Samadhi these conversions take place when there is a dissolution of the lower action, and when this happens something new comes.

The physical body, inclusive of its nerve power, vital power and also of its mental power, should be made sufficiently competent to hold and to realize higher values. The

body must also be strong and pure enough to absorb the shock of impact which the Divine Energy makes when it enters the human body. We have all seen or heard of persons, who although not making the proper necessary body or mental preparations experience some realization on the higher spiritual plane and perhaps even experience some kind of Samadhi. They may even commune with God.

Some have turned mad or have become extremely neurotic or have suffered from other physical or mental maladies; in plain words, the physical and mental nature must be made strong and pure in order to become a suitable vessel for spiritual development of any kind.

We find this ideal in the *Kathopanishad* where it is told, "Nayam Atma Bala Hineno Lavya." Here it tells that the soul cannot be realized or attained by a person with a weak constitution. This ideal is also propounded in the Patanjal Yoga system which contains elaborate discussions on how to prepare a body to be a fit and proper vehicle for spiritual life.

The body is the instrument as well as the container to withstand the impact of the Divine Energy when it is pulled down into it and through it. We also find in the scriptures that adequate mental requisites are necessary. In the Samkhya and Patanjal systems, we find systematic explanations for achieving the purification of the mind in order to get rid of desires and possessions, etc. This is absolutely necessary to achieve a higher state of mind in Dharana (focused attention) and Dhyana (concentration continued) and Samadhi (matured egoless concentration).

This aspect of physical and mental purification has been given much importance in all the schools of thought which hold as the goal the realization of higher values in spiritual life whether they call this goal Samadhi, God-realization, Nirvana, attainment of heaven or something else. So there should be no dispute that there must be

some prerequisites, some purification for any real advance in spiritual life.

Concerning this next point, which we have touched upon briefly heretofore, a very pertinent question arises. If an aspirant makes his body strong and pure and then attains some concentration of mind and at will causes his body functions (inclusive of breath and heart action) to cease and remains for sometime in this state of hibernation (similar to that of the frog or snake), is this to be considered as a Samadhi in its true connotation?

We have already told about the saint who was put into the pit dug by the subjects of King Ranjit Singh and how he remained there for a period of six months. The author and perhaps some of the readers must know of some Hatha Yogis or Raja Yogis who have stopped their breathing and heart action for some minutes or for a half hour or even longer. This is not an unusual feat amongst such Yogis. But is this a Samadhi?

Some Hatha Yogis say that it is really to be considered as a Samadhi because there is in conjunction with this state of suspended animation, some mental stillness or equilibrium out of which some occult powers come. Sometimes also, certain realization of higher values is claimed. It must be appreciated that these lofty claims of said realization of soul or God or Nirvana cannot be easily verified. Still, we should not deny that through such an achieved state, some occult powers which are easily verified often develop.

This author has, many a time, witnessed Yogis in such a state of equilibrium of the mind wherein the body activities, i.e. the heart and lung action and the activity of the nervous system, have stopped. Thus, we can testify that the state of suspended animation is a verified fact. One outstanding example of a Yogi with this power is Deorah Baba of Allahabad and Benares who was born some 200 or more years ago and is living today.

But still, is this state of suspended animation always a Samadhi?

Sometimes it is a lesser kind of Samadhi bringing lesser values. As we gradually develop the process and goals of spiritual evolution, we will see that any kind of Samadhi or any state of equilibrium, no matter how high, is not really the ultimate goal or state to be achieved. Any real Samadhi actually leads to a higher plane or state where some realization or some other achievement of higher spiritual value is gained.

It must, however, be appreciated that in this state of Samadhi experienced by the Hatha Yogis there is some change in their physical cells wherein some higher value is gained; but this is only the beginning. No state of Samadhi can be considered as a Samadhi *par excellence*. Life is continually on the move.

Now when the current of consciousness moves from the lower to the higher value, as we have explained in Chapter 4, the sheaths become purer and more subtle. In many Yoga Sutras (scriptures), it is explained that when a Yogi practices methodically for a certain period either Hatha Yoga or Raja Yoga techniques, the Yogi needs less gross food.

As his cells become more subtle, he takes nourishment directly from water, air and sunlight. In other words, his cells have become so pure and their action so subtle that energy needed for the life functions can be converted directly from these sources.

Other indications in his physical nature are also noticed. His voice becomes sweet and soft. His bodily excretions become less, and with an absence of foul odor. His body feels light. His skin becomes glossy and shiny.

With practice of Jnana, Raja or Bhakti, his power of sense perception becomes more subtle, deeper and more profound. The Anahata—or in other words, the super-

sonic Cosmic sound—can be heard. Sometimes entities or deities who are not visible to ordinary persons are seen and sometimes there is even an awareness of the fragrance of deities.

The higher the aspirant travels through Yogic practices through the more subtle Koshas, the more his cells are transformed. Eventually this transition culminates in a Samadhi wherein a dramatic transformation of the physical and mental cells takes place. In this way, the higher mental constituents have a pure physical field for attunement with higher Cosmic subtle realities and principles.

The veracity of the effect of the above transformations can be found in the records of two Yogis who lived in this modern age. We are referring to Sri Aurobindo and Paramahansa Yogananda, who practiced Jnana Yoga and Raja Yoga respectively with noteworthy success. The bodies of both of these great Yogis in death did not decompose for some weeks. This has been testified in both of these cases by physicians.

The physical body cells had become so devoid of impurities that the disintegration usually accompanying death was absent.

In some of the Christian saints this phenomenon has also been recorded; in fact, here and there in the custody of the Catholic Church there are bodies of such purified persons which still remain intact even centuries after death. St. Theresa of Avila, a Bhakta, is a noteworthy example.

At this point we should like to discuss how the body cells change specifically during the practice and experience of Samadhi. Both the scientist and the Yogi of today accept the fact that in Cosmic evolution the cells are always gradually changing. One cell gives rise to another which replaces it. This process goes on and on.

Actually, one cell is transformed to another in time

and space. For example, as Buddha tells us, a man at 5:00 p.m. on a particular day is really a changing reality and he is not the same man at 5:01 p.m. on that same day. In every new moment the cells have changed and both the man as a whole, and his individual cells, are only a shifting reality. When Yoga is practiced, the vital energy is harnessed in a particular way so that it can be channeled to force and enhance this movement of evolution. This rechanneling is done for the purpose of achieving a particular chosen goal.

Through Yoga, transformation of the cells occurs faster than in the usual course of the Cosmic evolution. The Cosmic journey will have to be made, no doubt about it, but the journey can be undertaken in a natural way by foot or a bit faster with the help of a bullock cart. A Yogi who is successful in his practices makes the journey quickly and easily, as if by car or plane.

Thus, to quicken the movement of evolution is to go against Nature and natural law. As we have explained, the Yogi rechannels the Cosmic force, to divert the cells from the natural course of Nature as she plods through the evolutionary course.

By sorting from Nature the spirit or soul within, the Yogi strives to follow its direction. Through his efforts, the higher intrinsic values are achieved more rapidly and marvelously, and his reward is Samadhi. But there is a price to pay, a premium due, if we choose thus to go against the natural law. What this premium is we shall discuss later, but all who have trod this path say that the price is little in comparison to the reward.

Now a person might think that since the cell change is needed for higher spiritual experience and since pseudo-Samadhi—however induced—makes some impression on the cells, it would have its value and gain. However, there is another very pertinent factor to be appreciated and

emphasized. As we have clearly stated above, both the physical and the mental body are to be prepared in order to hold the inrush of the Divine Energy that enters the body system to force a state of equilibrium.

When a state of equilibrium is artificially induced, before the bodily system is disciplined and purified to receive the inrush of energy, the vices or weak points in the character, so to speak, run rampant and out of control. For example, if a person has not yet curbed his tendency toward anger or his passion for sex or money, then with the force of Cosmic Energy he will find that these aspects of his nature are greatly magnified, and his ability to control or transform them is nil.

When the gates of a dam are opened before proper preparation and precaution, the inrush of water will break the existing banks and a damaging flood is sure to result. Just so, the damage is great when the inrush of Divine Energy comes into a body that is not properly prepared. Mental madness and breakdown in the physical body, especially in the nervous system, are all too often the signs in those who disregard these precautions.

No Yogic practice should be undertaken until there has been considerable effort and success in achieving some control over the animalistic nature. The danger is even more acute when a person who has not prepared his body and his mind for higher values and energies resorts to artificial means to induce a state of equilibrium. There is no short cut to spiritual goals. When these warnings go unheeded, the power called Satan in the Christian Bible rushes in to tempt and to destroy all virtue. The Bible cautions us that to go by the backdoor is to be a thief and a robber.

Whatever be the kind of Samadhi and whatever Kosha is involved, there is often a difference of opinion as to whether nerves become tense so that more energy is thereby canalized or if they become relaxed. This author feels

that nerves are *both* canalized and relaxed in the stages of going in and out of Samadhi.

At the time of concentration and meditation, relaxation and intensification go in succession. These stages are followed by Samadhi. There is no doubt that at a certain stage there is relaxation. But there also is a mental effort. Mental effort means that the nerve currents are canalized (utilized). In other words, nerve energy is forced to converge at a certain chosen point. This action goes against the normal flow of energy in Nature.

Mind's uninhibited tendency is to flicker away as it reacts to outer sense stimulants. This is the natural play of the nerve centers. The moment a person tries to collect the mind and wants to use extra force for this purpose, he has to make an extra expenditure of energy to collect and to concentrate it. Any time the mind is collected in a certain state of concentration in Samadhi or when a person is aware on the supraconscious level, more energy is drained out.

But if after reaching this stage of concentration, the mind is relaxed first and then goes into the subconscious region, the energy is conserved. For example, after concentrating to a certain point, some persons notice some subconscious bubbles; these bubbles or mental modifications can relate to past, present or future experiences or to abstract ideas. Sometimes, after these are observed for a while, the consciousness is again focused on a particular object. These bubbles are merely an experience along the path in pursuing a stage to something higher.

The bubbles can then be absorbed or dissolved. If a person can fully concentrate, he can go deep into the bubbles, dissolving the mind into a state similar to hibernation. The expenditure of energy is then greatly diminished and the mind plays in the subconscious region.

True Samadhi is somewhat different. In it, the mind is conscious or supraconscious. Therefore, the nerves are more tensed than under ordinary circumstances. If 10

watts of energy is spent for an hour on the physical plane, in mental work, for the same hour, the amount of energy spent would be 20 watts. In spiritual work, the expenditure would be in the range of 50, 60 or 100 watts.

There is a fixed amount of life force or a total amount of energy given for expenditure during a man's life, from birth to death. This store of energy can be supplemented or augmented to some extent by good habits, correct mode of breathing, good mode of thought and conduct, etc., or conversely it can be diminished by reversing the process. But it cannot be multiplied to any great extent. At best it can be enhanced to a certain degree, but the life span is *never* enhanced by going against Nature, even when the goal is to attain spiritual value.

Therefore, except in the case of Hatha and Raja Yoga where there is an emphasis on preserving the life current, in order to maintain good health and to extend the life span through spiritual effort, the sum total of life energy is more or less diminished.

When the life energy is spent by burning the candle at both ends, it will of course last a shorter time. When a man lives without following any discipline in his physical life and pursues concentrated spiritual practices, his life span is definitely shortened. When a person enjoys Samadhi or any supraconscious state, more energy is spent. Let us take, for example, the energies expended in suffering pain. Sri Ramakrishna said that it is better to spend energy experiencing pain on the physical plane than to use spiritual energy to overcome it, because when we are suffering on the physical level we are spending less energy than that expended when spiritual power is called upon to bring relief.

If we harness Samadhi for that purpose only, we are spending our basic energy for something which is only physical and personal in nature, and Samadhi is a state to be experienced for the benefit of the whole world.

Since extra energy is spent in Samadhi, on energy count alone, a person loses. Sri Ramakrishna summarizes

this in a beautiful way. He tells us that the whole ideal is lost when we use Samadhi as a means for personal gain. Why is the ideal lost? Because the more a person dedicates the mind to God or to spiritual realization, the more devotional and sincere he will be to the Ideal.

Now if a person dedicates his mind to negate his sufferings on the physical plane, instead of dedicating it to devotional worship or to acquiring knowledge of Divinity, how does he serve the higher Ideal?

The same principle is true when the glamor of astral travel and other Siddhis (occult powers) are sought after or enjoyed through Samadhi. Once you are detached from the spiritual goal, the Ideal is lost. Many saints have told the author of their own personal experiences—how they succumbed to the temptation to use Samadhi and other spiritual practices to gain special powers.

Even when these powers were used to relieve the sufferings of others, the Yogi using such power eventually became spiritually bankrupt and had to start over again with his spiritual practices to gain a spiritual Ideal. In addition, he had to pay the price for allowing his own volition to interfere with the Karma of others.

When the Ideal to be achieved is of higher value, the fruits of Samadhi are very tempting; with the first experiences of God-realization, some rewards are realized on the gross level. There is no longer a fear of death, disease, misfortune, disaster, etc. The soul, with its life force, has for many lifetimes played only in the gross world. When it is time for the return journey—for the return of the Prodigal Son—the journey is made through the nervous system in the Sushumna passage and the outer world then becomes the unreality.

As we have explained before, the nerve energy first makes its action felt through the Ida (energy used in thought) and Pingala (energy used in action) passages on the left and right sides respectively of the spinal column. The whole nervous system works through these currents, which are going up and down the passages. There are

several generators working in our body. This action is a continuous movement and the necessary electricity is generated from the action of our various organs such as the heart, lungs, etc. This current rises up the passages to the brain, and then in a continuous flow is divided and subdivided into many currents working through the nervous system.

With the practice of the various Yogas, including the Yoga of devotion, the whole physical system becomes calm and physically inactive. The Ida (subtle thought nerves) and Pingala (subtle action nerves) cease to function and the electricity comes to a sort of halt. When the mind becomes still, the heart, the lungs and the nerves become almost still.

The whole electrical current becomes static instead of dynamic, as it was previously. At this time the current resides only in the middle of the spinal cord. This passage is called the Sushumna passage. When the energy is withdrawn from the Ida and Pingala passages to the Sushumna, it is considered the most balanced state of the human body. It is in that balanced state that Samadhi comes.

Samadhi is the cessation of the whole current of life energy which has been acting through the nerve and the mental systems. When nerves, mind and intellect are at a standstill, the reflection of higher truth comes. Just as the rippled water cannot reflect the moon in its clearest form; yet when the water is still, there is full reflection. In the stage of Samadhi the mind becomes entirely still and ceases to function, and, as we hitherto explained, the organic functions come to a halt. Thus the action of the subtle nerves involved in the state of Samadhi make their impression on the physical body. When the nerve energy is forced to play in the Sushumna passage, the nerves in the Ida and Pingala no longer play each in their own way.

We must appreciate that it is the physical cells acting both individually and collectively which carry the ex-

perience of the soul. Man feels through his cells and thinks through his cells. That is why the physical and the mental systems of man both undergo systematic changes, as, through Samadhi or other spiritual practices, he achieves his spiritual goals.

CHAPTER 7

SAMADHI VIEWED FROM DIFFERENT SCHOOLS

The reader might have noticed that the author has been leading to this point, i.e. the concept and experience of Samadhi has been developing gradually in beautiful and diverse ways through subsequent and successive ages. Still, in all of the various concepts we find a single germ which impregnates all of these ideas. These are best traced in the various scriptures. In turn, these scriptures have formed the basis for techniques and practices to achieve the Ideal.

There are references to Samadhi even in the early *Vedas*. We also find a reference to Samadhi, although not so named, in the *Bible* in the first book of *Genesis*. We have many times pointed out that all the views of those who have reported their spiritual experiences converge, to say that Samadhi is essentially a state of tranquillity, and we hold that in addition it is a state in which further and eternal manifestation comes. Now we venture to propose that this tranquil state which today we call Samadhi was there even in the very beginning of creation. This is the state of Divinity that is described in *Genesis*. In other words, we are saying that creation starts with and from Samadhi.

It is important to remember further that always in reference to Infinity, whether it is termed as God or Cosmic

Energy, there can never be a question of time and space as these terms are commonly understood. In the Infinite there can be only an eternal Now. Yet it cannot be denied that it is convenient and necessary to man's finite mind to take an artificial starting point, even though man has come to appreciate that creation is simply a continuous state of flux. Creation means transformation from one state to another or, in other words, expansion. Hence in reference to God or Infinity or the Absolute, we are to consider that He is both (and at the same time) a state of tranquillity and the eternally manifesting principle of creation.

This total aspect has been beautifully explained by Shakti (dynamic aspect of Divinity) and Shaiva (static aspect) cults in Hindu philosophy. They agree with the scientists of today that Cosmic Energy is the only reality in this Cosmic Show. When observed from the static point of view It is noncreative. This principle is known as Siva sitting or lying in Samadhi. When this power is conceived as the action of manifestation, it is projected as Shakti or Kali.

Kala means space or time, or in other words, Cosmic Energy in its dynamic action. *Kali* means the power of Kala (space and time) and Cosmic Energy in Its static form is known as *Siva*. The concept of time comes only when some action is viewed. In any event, where the primordial energy is conceived with the theory and process of creation (Kali), much light is thrown out for man to get a better glimpse of the world he lives in.

In *Nasadiya*, found in the ancient *Vedas*, there is a beautiful reference that has been translated by Max Muller (pages 100-102 from *Indian Philosophy* by Radhakrishna, Vol. I):

"There was then neither what is nor what is not, there was no sky nor the heaven which is beyond. What covered? Where was it, and in whose shelter? Was the water the deep abyss (in which it lay)?

"There was no light (distinction) between night and

day. That one breathed by itself without breath, other than it there has been nothing. Darkness there was, in the beginning all this was a Sun without light; the germ that lay covered by the husk, that One was born by the power of heat (Tapas). Love overcomes it in the beginning which was the seed springing from mind, poets having searched in their hearts found by wisdom the bond of what is in what is not.

"Their ray which was stretched across was it below or was it above? There were seedbearers, there were powers, self-power below and Will above. Who then knows, who has declared it here, from whence was born this creation?

"The Gods came later than this creation, who then knows whence it arose? He from whom this creation arose, whether he made it or did not make it, the highest seer in the highest heaven, he forsooth knows, or does even he know?"

Almost the same thing was said in the first book of the *Bible*, Genesis 1: 1 to 3.

"1. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
2. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
3. And God said, let there be light; and there was light."

We find in these references from the *Vedas* and the *Bible* that there was one significant point referring to the beginning. The *Vedas* say that "Darkness was in the beginning and was a Sea without light."

On analysis, several things are found revealed in this beautiful and profound description of the thoughts of the seers. First, they perceived some stage or state of a beginning when there was nothing. At least, what was there cannot be described, because whatever was the condition, it is beyond the comprehension of the mind strata. In the supraconscious state of Samadhi this something would be grasped or felt, but words could not express it; this is the

state of Samadhi and this is the state which is projected as the beginning.

"The germ that lay covered by the husk, that One was born by the power of Tapas (energy heat). Love overcame it in the beginning which was the seed springing from the mind. Poets, Seers having searched their heart, found by wisdom the bond of what is contained and what is not." Simultaneously with this state and following it is another movement.

It is called Tapas (energy heat). Inherent in the Tapas is the urge to manifest, and it is this urge that is the call of creation, or we might say it is the volition which goes on constantly. Now we should ask, "Why this creation?" There is only one answer and this too is revealed in the scriptures. The answer is *Love*. As it is said in the Hindu scriptures, "Was God in need of anything in the beginning? Everything He was, is and always will be. He needs nothing. But in order to enjoy Himself, to love himself, He feels the urge to expand to enjoy in diverse ways." As Sri Aurobindo says, "Love is the keynote of creation."

The point we are making is that all these ideas and ideals should be carried, not only in contemplating the state of Infinity but also in contemplating the finite experience as these experiences reflect in Samadhi. Why have thousands of aspirants all through the ages run after Samadhi, be it by this path or by that path? Because this is where the finite being loses himself in the Sea of Cosmic Samadhi (tranquil state).

It is in Samadhi that the force of Cosmic energy passing through the evolutionary process and acting in the form of the finite being finds the urge for a new shape. The finite self thus finds new vistas surging within him. In this experience there is the opening of a new dimension. Some urge, some ideal merges from his consciousness into such an expansive state that he bursts himself out, as it were, into a new dimension. In this way, he finds the expression and the fulfillment of evolution.

Through this process, God eternally loves and experiences Himself in ever new multiplicity.

The *Kathopanisad* gave more light. In the Yoga of the *Kathopanisad* there is manifest a hint of the stages of Samadhi (intense concentration) that shows some similarity to those we have discussed when dealing with the subject of Koshas. In the 3rd chapter of the *Kathopanisad*, verses 10 to 12, we may look for guidance and clarification of this view.

On the lowest rung of the ladder it tells that there exists first material objects; next comes the gross senses, then the subtle senses, then the mind, then the intellect (Buddhi), then the Mahat (the Soul in its greatness), with the highest of all being the all pervasive Infinite Tranquil Soul. This indicates the steps to be taken to reach this higher rung where the soul merges into the Cosmic Soul to enjoy Divine bliss.

In verse 13, in the same chapter, we find expression of how and why the speech as well as the other sense organs like eyes, ears, nose etc., are to merge into the mind. The next step is for the mind to be merged into the Buddhi or intellect and next the intellect should be merged into the Great Self. In the last step, this Great Self merges into the Universal Self of peace and bliss or, in other words, into the vast Cosmic Soul of Tranquillity. How clearly it is shown how the aspirant climbs from one rung or sheath to another in the spiritual ladder!

As we have already discussed, when one stage or rung is attained there is, so to say, a pause of attainment. This pause (Samadhi) justifies the next step—that the aspirant is eligible and ready to attain a higher rung on the ladder. These pauses attained through concentration at these various levels are the respective steps in the stages in the hierarchy of Samadhi. It is also interesting to note that in verse 11, it is explained that there is a higher state to be attained which is superior to the Atman in greatness. The final word says that Purusha (Cosmic Being per-

sonified) is superior to the unmanifested state, and that nothing is superior to Purusha. Thus, it points to the higher goal which man can hope to achieve; there is no further goal indicated here.

How far this unmanifested state is another name for Prakriti (dynamic aspect of Cosmos or Shakti) and how far this Purusha is a counterpart of the self-same Purusha of the Samkhya School is too much to be discussed here. At least there is some similarity, and both these schools of thought say that nothing is superior to Purusha. They are saying that in the realm of subtlety this Purusha, be it pure intelligence of the Samkhya or be it the Purushottama of the *Gita*, is placed on the highest rung of subtlety as a supreme state or Being of realization and nothing further is to come.

Perhaps from that time until now the authors and commentators of the *Kathopanisad* and the Samkhya systems, as well as other seers of this truth, could project their vision only to a realization which the mind was capable of at that time. But since there is no end to God-realization, one should not put a road block in the path of aspiration. We find, as we have found before and shall find hereafter, that although the terminology may be different in the similar experiences and realizations recalled in the testimonials of many spiritual aspirants—whether from the Vedantic knowledge point of view or from the Buddhic point of view or from the Tantrik Yoga point of view—there is a uniform quality in these experiences, when viewed according to where they are on the ladder.

We are now suggesting that, as hinted in the last Chapter of the *Gita*, there is higher realization than envisioned even by the great seers and Rishis of the Vedantists and other Jnana schools of thought, including *Kathopanisad*. This new ideal not only includes their point of vision but also adds something new.

In this new realization there comes the fusion of God in form with God as the Absolute. These two concepts fuse to reveal the Purushottama, and ultimately the

Incarnation. To realize God in these dimensions, one experiences Samadhi from the angle of vision of the Vedantists, Samkhyists and Buddhists and adds to this the experience of Mukta (liberation), or the Samadhi of the Bhakta in its higher form.

From *Kathopanisad*—Fifth chapter, 15th Sloka (verse):

"Nor there shines the sun nor moon nor stars, not those lightnings, still less the fire on earth. In this shining, all these shine after. By His light all these are illuminated."

From *Bible* chapter 22, Vs. 5.

"And there shall be no night there and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light and they shall reign forever and ever.

Samkhya-Patanjal

The Samkhya-Patanjal system is to be considered as the basis of Yoga and therefore it serves as the basis for any serious consideration of Samadhi. Although there are different moods or states of enlightenment or realization which can be considered in the category of Samadhi as delineated in the *Vedas*, yet for a consistent and scientific development of the methods of attaining some sort of realization through meditation and Samadhi, the credit must be given in the main to the Samkhya philosophy as expounded and developed through the Patanjal Yoga system.

The profound philosophical and psychological basis of the Samkhya system is the structure which found its fruition in a wonderful, practical philosophy of Patanjali. Undoubtedly the antiquity of the Samkhya system goes back to a period long before the battle of Kurukshetra was fought and the epic of the Mahabharata, was com-

piled. As to the date of the compilation of the Mahabharata opinions vary. But with due respect to all shades of opinions, it may be safely said that the battle was fought at least 2000 years before the birth of Christ.

Hence we see that the Samkhya system was in existence from 4 to 5000 years back.

Historically, we know that the advent of Buddha is placed long before the Christian era. The Buddha definitely practiced Yoga and as we shall show in more detail later, his technique and goal followed the general pattern of the Samkhya-Patanjal system.

We know that Buddha himself learned his Yoga from Saint Arad and there are some references here and there showing that even in those early days the Buddha philosophy showed a striking similarity to the earlier system of Yoga; thus, it is much indebted to the Samkhya philosophical system.

The Jaina philosophy also claims equal antiquity with Samkhys, but, in fact, it too borrowed much of its basic thought from the earlier Samkhya system. Although it is not our purpose to deal with the history of these systems but only with the development of practices and the ensuing goals, we are expressing our view that the Samkhya-Patanjal system is the earliest in human civilization to offer a scientific, practical system of meditation.

Samkhya Yoga laid stress upon the fact that the ultimate goal is liberation of the soul (Purusha) from the influence and clutch of Prakriti (Nature). They say that the gross and subtle forces of Prakriti impose their force upon Purusha and thus cause the manifestation of phenomena. In this way, Nature influences the sould to think erroneously that it is part and parcel of the phenomenal world. Liberation can be achieved through certain practices and renunciation with the aim of the subjugation of mental modification.

This school equates meditation with contemplation. In this state the self or subject as the knower thinks or

knows one object only. Patanjali used 3 words to describe this process: Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi.

To restrict or restrain or constrain mental modification to any one object is an act named or styled as Dharana. When Dharana becomes more mature it is called Dhyana. In this state the mind is restricted always to one object of meditation.

All other objects are excluded and the mental flow is constant without interruption. The objection may come from the Buddhist that since everything changes, the existence of any one thing only appears to be a momentary one. In other words, what was the river water at a particular place at a particular point in time is not the same river water even at the next moment. But if everything, according to Buddhists, is a continuous changing flux how can we continue to think the same thing for a long time? For example, according to them if I try to contemplate or meditate on a rose before me on the first of January 1973 at 12.00 am. sharp, at even one second past 12.00 a.m. the rose will not be the same which I saw at 12.00 a.m. sharp.

So how can I continue to think the same thing by looking at an object that is changing from moment to moment?

Buddhists would try to defend their view by saying that instead of trying to meditate or contemplate and concentrate on the rose at one moment past 12.00 a.m. or 2 seconds after 12:00 a.m. the practice should be to raise the mind to try to think of the rose outside of time. The thought or object contemplated or meditated upon at 12.00 a.m. sharp should be repeated over and over again in the mind. This succession or repetition on only one thought at a given moment is the process which the Buddhists use to achieve the same thing as Samkhya and Patanjali want.

Now when the Dhyana is more mature, a state comes when the I-ness seems to go. The mental modifications become one modification; i.e. the object of the meditation

stays as knowledge only; even the knowledge that I am meditating on such and such an object may also be gone. This third phase is called *Samadhi*. When this maturity of concentration diffuses it falls back, so to say, from Samadhi and the I-consciousness returns so that the 'I' can say, "I was so long meditating on an object."

Following the stage of Samadhi comes the stage of Samapatti. There is complete consummation or permanent engrossment on a single object. Although the Buddhists use the word Samapatti, this author feels they have borrowed this term or coinage from Samkhya Yoga. Even Samapatti or this superengrossed state of concentration of mind is divided still further.

This process of meditation is clearly developed in the Patanjal system and we refer all interested readers to the texts of Patanjali, *Yoga Philosophy of Patanjali* by Samkhya Yogacharya Swami Hariharananda Aranya. On page 101 of this book there is a nice chart showing the different types of meditation. The first type of meditation using a gross object is called Savitarka Samapatti. For example, if the sun is taken as a gross object for meditation, concentration is to be made on its various aspects: namely its shape, distance from earth, materials of its composition etc. The focussing on these gross aspects of the sun is to be done with the help of words. When this Samapatti or engrossment becomes unrelated to words it is Nirvitarka Samadhi.

The next stage is called Savichara Samapatti. This is concentration or engrossment using a more subtle subject as the object of meditation. The meditation is done here without the help of words. For example, the object of meditation would be the luminosity of the sun and the meditator tries to engross his mind on this aspect of the sun.

The meditation does not stay only on the luminosity but it goes even deeper to the still more subtle aspects of the sun which cause the luminosity. In not taking the help of words, the Yogi arrives at such an engrossment that all

other subtle aspects are eliminated until only the luminosity itself is there. Finally only the still subtler aspect (called Tanmatra; like Monad) which causes the luminosity is left in the mind.

The mind and memory are both free from all verbal concepts and the mind plays only in the engrossment of the subtle nature of the subtle object that has been chosen for this engrossment. It is in this state that the first feeling of bliss comes. The cognition of the 'I,' that "I am feeling, I am seeing" etc., still remains. Higher matured state is called Nirvichara Samapatti in the fourth stage.

The awareness of *I-ness* can take different shapes. For example, if John is meditating on a lamb and becomes completely engrossed in the lamb, a time may come when John feels "I am the lamb only." In other words, the subject has become the object. In another phase, John may become aware only of his own *I-ness*. In this instance the object has become the subject. Only the *I-ness* remains and the lamb has dissolved into this *I-ness*. Although these two approaches differ in the process of meditation, it is possible to experience either attitude. In both instances the ego is free of its limitation of identity with the body and what happens thereafter cannot be told but only experienced.

In other words, in simple terms, the Samkhya Yogi wants to comprehend the Cosmic Nature starting with its gross state and going to subtler and subtler states. The more the subtler states are realized, the more maturity there is in meditation. These stages follow a pattern of Dharana (concentration on one object), Dhyana (continuation of the concentration on one object) and Samadhi (when concentration is so intense the *I-ness* is gone). The intense mood of engrossment of Samadhi is followed by the state of Samapatti, the state achieved when the engrossment is for a long period.

These practices are based on the philosophical thought that the manifested world has come from a subtle state to ever more gross forms and their method is to pursue these gross forms of the world back to the source from

which they have come. Through Cosmic evolution the world has come into being.

The soul inherently carries the urge of evolution which moves it to pursue values back to their source or, in other words, to know and to realize more and more subtle stages of the human mind. In this way names and forms are gradually eliminated. Through these practices the power of the intellect or mind becomes so subtle and powerful and concentrated that it can at once go behind the manifestation of an object to the prior condition of its subtler and causal state.

Naturally, at this stage the help of words is not needed. In fact, it is superfluous in such a state of engrossment. The more this concentrative power develops, the deeper the cognition or revelation of objects (however subtle) which are used, for the subject of concentration may be revealed spontaneously in their causal state.

Patanjali classifies the mind, whatever be its nature, into five grades:

1. Ksipta (mind in distraught state)
2. Mudha (mind in stupefied state)
3. Viksipta (mind in restless state)
4. Ekagra (mind in a state of one-pointedness)
5. Niruddha (mind when completely suppressed).

The reader should appreciate that the exact translation for expressing the subtlety of mind is not available in English. It can be described here only to an extent.

The human mind in its early development is in a state of Ksipta or distraughtness. In other words, the person whose mind is in this state is running here and there after divergent objects. There is no link nor coherency to any particular goal. The objects of his desires relate neither to the past nor to anything specific in the future. However, when the mind is a bit developed, it becomes attached to certain objects of desire and in the effort to enjoy these, ignores outside stimulants and objects.

The second state is called Mudha. It is a state when the mind is stupefied. The third state is Viksipta; the mind is restless from the frustration of either not fulfilling its desires or in its effort to fulfill them. In this state the mind is constantly torn by the desire for this object or that object or the effort to grasp this thought or that thought.

When, however, the person begins to control and to bridle his thoughts and mental modifications to one single point, the mind is in the state of Ekagra. This one-pointedness is the fourth stage and the starting point for a Yogi. When the Yogi succeeds to a great extent in suppressing all mental modifications and comes to a perfect state of one-pointedness, the mind has reached the fifth state called Niruddha wherein all thoughts except the one that is selected for focus are suppressed. This state is termed as Samadhi and is considered as a state of extreme one-pointed concentration.

Samapatti is the next. This is the continuation of the state of Niruddha (every mental disturbance stopped); it can be considered as the full achievement of a matured state of concentration. Even at this stage there are higher more subtle states to achieve.

A further clarification is needed; it should be remembered that from our viewpoint these mental states of intense concentration on one object or one idea are not always a Samadhi. It is inaccurate to say that when a man is mad after the gross things of the world and is still under the influence of lust, greed, anger and other passions, although he has a concentrated mind no doubt, he has achieved a state of Samadhi.

If Samadhi is to be considered simply as a state of extreme concentration wherein all unrelated thoughts and objects are absent then whatever the motivation for the concentration, he would be enjoying a proper Samadhi. For example, a person could be so much engrossed in some thought or object of lust that he would forget all other things in the world. Even in this attitude all his mental modifications except that one thought would be shut out

for the time being. In that state a person also might be practicing simultaneously some pseudo-religious disciplines to get more intense concentration of mind which he might be tempted to call Samadhi. But when Samadhi is not related to some higher intrinisic values, it is to be considered only as a pseudo-Samadhi.

Second, the state called *Mudha* (stupefied, bewildered, infatuated) is one whereby a state of pseudo-Samadhi can also be reached. For example, a person may be thinking deeply on some wordly object of desire and he may achieve immense concentration on this object and his mind may become dead to all other interrupting thoughts. Again, no higher values are involved.

Similarly, in the third state of Viksipta (restlessness and scattered) a person can concentrate his mind to reach an intense state of concentration leading to a pseudo-Samadhi.

We have considered all the states of intense concentration arrived at in the first three states of mind (Ksipta, Mudha, Viksipta) as not being a proper Samadhi because any such concentration and realization of the gross goal only leads us back into the field of Nature to get further enchained into the bondage of desire and the cycles of birth and death. No liberation from pain and suffering comes. There is a vacant state of mind with no Divine joy or bliss. Furthermore, in a proper Samadhi, some new intrinsic value comes forth.

In the fourth state, a real Samadhi (intense concentration with the realization of some higher intrinsic values) can be realized. In this state an object, gross or subtle, is deliberately chosen for meditation and is concentrated upon with the purpose of detaching the mind from worldly desires. Then and then only the true state of Samadhi (intense concentration for a spiritual ideal) begins to dawn. In this state of concentration only one object remains to shine in the mental field.

The fifth stage comes when meditation (Dhyana) is perfected; only one object comes to the mind as a continuous

flux without any interruptions by other mental modifications of thought. For example, when a person can meditate perfectly engrossed in an object of his choice, say a rose, the meaning of the rose or the vision of the rose will continue to come in a continuous flow; all other thought will be stopped. These thoughts may come in close succession either as the same thought or as a vision. There is no gap in this state of engrossment. This is achieved when a person masters the art of meditation. This state becomes so perfected that the vision or thought will occur in such a continuous or successive flow that it comes in a dream also. What a person is habituated to meditate on or chant in the daytime, he will continue to see or do so in dream also.

Samprajnata and Asamprajnata are very specific disciplines for maturing meditation. The goal is achieved when, through constant practice and supreme detachment, all mental fluctuations disappear and only the latent impression remains in the mind in a dormant state. Then we have Asamprajnata Samadhi.

Samprajnata Samadhi comes first and is the forerunner. When concentration is arrived at by Vitarka, Vichara, Ananda and Asmita it is called Samprajnata Samadhi. In Vitarka, the mental modification arises and rests on the object of meditation. When knowledge (with the medium of words) is related to any gross object, it is a Vitarka type of Samadhi. When the subject or object of concentration (for example a tree) is gross matter and concentration and knowledge is derived therefrom it is called Savitarka Samadhi; but in the absence of the complexities of words it is called Nirvitarka.

In the second stage when the mental concentration is matured to go beyond the gross objects to the subtle principles by a specially prescribed meditative process, the point of concentration arrived at is called Savichara Samprajnata Samadhi. In this kind of Samadhi, unlike the first type, it is subtle matter and subtle faculties which are the subject matter of concentration. It is called Vichara

which means analytical. Through analysis, mind goes from the gross to the subtle state or aspect of the subject of the meditation.

In the third type, Ananda, a person transcends the above two stages of concentration. The mind is freed from the feelings of the sense organs as well as the vital action forces and thereby attains a state of calmness. Thereafter, the Yogi attains a state of bliss (Ananda) called Sananda Samadhi, which brings divine joy.

It may be mentioned that this blissful state can also be attained by a Raja Yogi through control of vital forces only, and also by a Tantrik Yogi or Bhakta Yogi who has through other methods brought his mind and feeling to a one-pointed focus.

The fourth and last type is called Asmita type. In the preceding stages of Vitarka and Vichara one has to depend on some specified object for meditation, either gross or subtle. In the third stage one depends on some agent or instrument for knowledge wherefrom a state of bliss comes, and this feeling (happiness and bliss) remains in a pervasive manner. But in Asmita, the whole concentration is focussed back on *'I'* sense; it is the 'Ego' who meditates on itself.

In all the above four stages the Samadhi is not matured or complete since the fluctuations are not yet completely closed. The higher state still to seek is Asamprajnata Samadhi. In this stage, all mental fluctuation finally go through detachment and practice and only some latent impressions remain in the mental regions. In Sanskrit this is called *Samskara*. This state of concentration is claimed by the Samkhya Yogi to be without an object and some say that practice of this Yoga makes the mind objectless.

There are other higher and more subtle stages and practices of Samadhi leading to Kaivalya but these are too high to be understood by one who has not practiced meditation enough to understand what comes after the

stages explained above. Space does not permit us to discuss these here.

Although in Asamprajnata Samadhi the fluctuation of the mind ceases, some latencies still remain. So even this state has to be matured until these latencies are gone.

The reader may have noted that in the Samkhya system the word Yoga and the word Samadhi have a similar or identical meaning. If we look to the commentaries on concentration (Samadhipada) of the Samkhya-Patanjal system, we find it explained there that Samadhi means the Yoga of concentration.

To summarize in another way, there is a hierarchy of meditation which goes from Dharana to Dhyana to Samadhi to Samapatti wherein the mind gets hold of more and more subtle objects and gradually does without any other concepts or words which the human mind has habituated itself to in the past. Such a mind no longer comprehends the world and its forms in the ordinary way.

For example, if one starts meditation on oneself—as the subject for the object of meditation—the *I* as the subject knows itself; first he meditates on the term *John*. He can meditate only on the gross body, and to arrive at a concentrated stage he takes the help of the word *John*. A time comes when he has achieved some success and he need not take the help of the word *John* at all. The thought is then concentrated spontaneously on the body without any such reference to the word *John*. When the meditation matures further and the body appears spontaneously to the mind he begins to think many details about the body such as its complexion, its size, its shape, etc., still using the help of forms.

When meditation further matures, he will find that behind this screen of grossness, there are the subtle existences of things which are the cause of the shapes and qualities in the gross states. At this stage he includes in his thought the *I* and other mental modifications that are part and parcel of *John*.

In the next step, he is to select only one aspect of the

subtle qualities of John and eliminate all the other aspects or objects from his mind. As this stage matures he comes to feel as explained above, that *I am meditating only*—nothing else. With further maturity, the sense that I am meditating also goes and there remains a feeling or cognition of I—I only.

There is a further state of maturity when the feeling of *I* or *ego* also goes. This is the stage when the subject and knowledge have merged into one; at this stage who can meditate on whom? Both the knower and the object are fused into one and no-thing, except awareness remains. When the mind of John again falls back from that state of engrossment, he will feel that he was so long meditating, and he had a feeling of bliss and quiescence, and there was nothing in his mind besides this feeling.

It might be pertinent here to mention that the above description of meditation stretches from the Samkhya system to include the system of meditation of the Advaita Vedantists. Since these methods are so similar and so intermixed these days, the above process and steps seem to be universally practiced whether considered as the Samkhya system, the Patanjal system, the Advaita system or the Buddhist system (whether this similarity is recognized or not by the separate schools). It is quite evident to the author that the Samkhya Patanjal system offers the most complete analysis of the functions and use of the mind of any other schools, ancient or modern.

One important point remains to be emphasized. In the Samkhya system and also in all the other systems mentioned above, when this high state of meditation is achieved wherein the *I-ness*, or ego is dissolved, their system and philosophy comes to a full stop. When meditation matures into Samapatti and one gets enlightenment and liberation thereby attaining Kaivalya, the highest goal is achieved and there is only nothingness beyond; in their view this is the final act in the Cosmic Show.

Again, we put a question to the advocates of this sys-

tem. When the Soul or Self or Purusha (Individual Spirit) extricates itself out of Prakriti (Nature) and regains its former full resplendent and blissful state, is there a halt of the whole Cosmic Show so far as that particular soul is concerned? Hence, when all Purushas or Souls have attained such liberation or Kaivalya, what will remain for the Cosmic Performer? When the whole Cosmic Show reaches a defunct state, at that time will the Cosmic game be over with no-thing remaining for the Cosmic player to perform?

The Samkhya system as well as many other systems does not consider this question. For them Samadhi (intense concentration) and Samapatti (intense concentration secured and continued until the feeling of *I-ness* has gone) is the goal to be achieved. The function of perfect Samadhi and Samapatti ends with its contribution of liberating the soul.

But this author continually asks the pertinent question: "Why will there be such a halt?" The Samkhya system as well as some others cannot tell. When their thought goes to a certain distance it cries *halt* and the whole Cosmic evolution seemingly stops. When some of these schools allow that everything is perpetual change, they are not true to their own concept.

"The Cosmic Show is a continual go," is what they proclaim. Then how can there be any halt at any certain stage of time or evolution? The answer to this dilemma will be found in other systems which will be developed later in this book.

BUDDHIST SYSTEM

Even though there may be a hue and cry from both the Samkhya School and the Buddhist school, we are proposing here that these systems have a great deal in common. In the following pages, Buddhism will be discussed in the same detail as the Samkhya-Patanjal system

and the reader can judge if he agrees with this observation.

In considering Buddhism, we are turning now in particular to the Theraveda school of thought to find their practice and goal. The Theraveda school of thought has made some honest endeavor to develop a psychological and methodical point of view in the practice of meditation and the achievement of Samadhi (intense concentration). Zen Buddhism and the Mahayana school as propounded by the Tibetan branch of Buddhism will be considered separately.

We have mentioned in the above that undoubtedly the Samkhya system is of much earlier origin than that of Buddhism. Even so, the Samkhya system is more analytical and is more clear, lucid and logical. There is, however, a basic difference between the Buddhist system and the Samkhya system in their respective concepts as to the nature and the constitution of the soul. Even in this aspect we find the concept as viewed in the Samkhya system clearer and more systematic.

The Buddha didn't believe in the permanence of the soul itself; he said that the soul is nothing but a continuous mental flux or flow of consciousness. At the same time he believed in reincarnation and the transmigration of the soul. If the soul or self is nothing but a continually changing flux and the movement from one state of consciousness to another, then the process of death and the taking of a new birth is just like the kindling of one lamp from the fire of another lamp.

Although this concept helps to support the Buddhist theory of constant change, many things are left to be explained and many perplexities arise which cannot be solved. For example, why, in that case, do some individuals start their life with bad Karma? How is it that doing good deeds in this life will give a good supply of credit in the next life? Undoubtedly Buddha would agree with Bergson that change is the reality; but the Buddha adds

that the soul is nothing but a process of behavior or, in other words, of becoming.

That the whole phenomenon relating the soul or self to good or bad Karma carries over from another life cannot be explained by successive movement from one stage or experience to another when there is no continuing identity of the soul. Buddha would say that Bhava—or becoming—is only one state that appears as conscious movement interconnecting the consciousness of the next moment; the whole process as such, we call soul.

This concept presents many difficulties which led the followers of Buddha to tacitly hold that there is something—an abiding principle—which links the successive stages one with another. This something can only be called changelessness in a changing world. In other words, the soul is to be considered as something that does not change in the process of change. This concept does not exactly follow the Vedantist and Samkhya thought in their terms of Atma and Jiva.

We have mentioned above that Buddha took instruction in the practice of meditation in his earlier days from two Yogis, namely Alad and Uddaka. These two Yogis were in great prominence at that time and were practicing both Jnana and Raja Yoga. Undoubtedly Buddha propounded a system thereafter that developed in a new way and reached some new stage of perfection; still, it is evident that he never did get completely out of the influence of the Samkhya system and its basic philosophy and practices.

In fact, many of his terms and procedures seem not only to be copied from the Samkhya system of meditation, but even the details given for sitting in meditation are similar. We find in both the Samkhya and the Buddhist system that there is important stress on how to start meditation.

At first, for example, the Buddhists, like in Samkhya Yoga, give the instructions to start with gross objects and then gradually to replace these gross objects with more

subtle ones. Both of the systems lay emphasis on the necessity for preparing the ground through purification of the body and mind by simple physical postures, and they both emphasize cultivating moral values.

In the beginning, Buddhism didn't methodically explain how to cultivate these moral values step by step with any special method. He simply said that there were three basic requisites: namely, Shila, Samadhi and Panna. By Shila, Buddha meant the principles and training of moral purity including the control of speech, right action and right living. The observance of these principles ultimately leads to right concentration of mind in Samadhi (intense one-pointed concentration). When the concentration reaches maturity and is perfected it leads to Panna. In brief, Panna may be described as that full knowledge that leads to liberation or Nirvana. This practice, the author boldly says, is copied from Samkhya. According to the latter, Samapatti or Ritambhara Prajna leads to the state of liberation.

There are other similarities, too. Both systems denounce the occult powers yet both systems proclaim that occult powers make their inevitable appearance in the course of the spiritual practices of meditation; we even find that some of the sects of these schools openly champion the cause of gaining some of these powers.

Samadhi has an important place in the philosophy and practice of both schools. We find that Samadhi is graded into a diversity and also into a hierarchy, according to the methods followed and the ideal to be achieved in the spiritual practices. Both of these schools of thought term Samadhi as intense concentration and the respective Samadhis culminate into a state termed as Bipashana by the Buddhists and Samapatti by the Samkhya school. Buddhist terms like Dhyana, Dharana, Samadhi, etc., are found in the Samkhya system and denote similar meanings.

For example, Jhana in the Buddhist system denotes almost the exact concept and practice as Dhyana in the

Samkhya system. The first stage of practicing Jhana or Dhyana is in selecting a good place of solitude and calmness. The aspirant should have only a light meal and a sufficient time should pass to allow for the initial stages of digestion. The aspirant should then sit cross-legged with his spinal axis straight.

Next he is to take a few deep breaths to expel carbon dioxide from the lungs, as carbon dioxide makes the mind restive. Then he is to put out of his mind those obstacles that block the realization of Nirvana. These include, for example, desires arriving from the senses, passions such as malice, hatred, slothful torpor, distraction and remorse, perplexity, etc. These instructions are very similar to those found in the Samkhya Yoga system and in the *Upanishads* and in the *Gita*.

In Buddhism, the practice of Jhana is divided into four stages. The first stage is attained when the hindrances to progress are eliminated as the five psychic factors—Vitakka (right thinking), Vicara (sustained mental effort), Piti (throwing out any thoughts that are contrary to the goal through a zest or rapture for the ideal to be achieved), Sukha (happy feeling toward the goal) and Ekaggata (one-pointedness coming out of the other four factors)—become strong enough in the mind to eliminate the obstacles in meditation as noted above.

To achieve the second stage of Jhana, the systematic elimination of the five factors must be achieved. The aspirant acquires the ability to fix his mind on whatever object or idea that he chooses; he finds that this practice brings with it some new form of calmness that he then desires to accentuate; he then finds he must give up his desire to be happy and content with his achievements and must eliminate the zest that is the precarious factor that supports his practices.

When he has neutralized his feelings, then he has achieved the third state of Jhana. In the fourth stage all attachment must go, including the attachment and satisfaction of the achievement of the first three stages; and in this

perfect equanimity, there comes inward vision or intuition. At this stage certain occult powers such as clairvoyance, clairaudience, and other supernormal powers are likely to come into play.

When these four stages of Jhana are practiced and accomplished, Jhana gives birth to right concentration which is termed *Samadhi*. This perfect concentration or Samadhi gives the fruit of perfect knowledge and is called Panna. In other words, the advanced state of meditation is called Samadhi and then this state gives rise to Panna wherein there is full knowledge, perfect knowledge, and *a kind of* enlightenment comes. When this perfect knowledge of Panna is completely matured, it culminates in a state of Nirvana.

We feel constrained here to point out that the terms Jhana, Samadhi, and Yoga are used in the Buddhist philosophy with almost similar meaning; however, the Buddhist system expounds various kinds or grades of Samadhi (intense concentration) which are delineated as follows:

1. Jhana
2. Vimokkha. (this is the threefold release from the misconception of the soul, from the illusion of permanence and from the hankering after worldly objects).
3. Samadhi (here there is a threefold concentration revealing the true nature of the soul and the nature of the world as transitory and giving pain).
4. Samapatti (this more mature stage is the culmination of the first three grades).
5. Nanadassana (in this grade more perfect knowledge and insight comes, including that of past and future lives).
6. Magga-Bhavana (here the development of the 37 stages of the constituents of enlightenment comes).
7. Phala Sacchikiriya (the realization of the fruit from the above grades of meditation brings the aspirant to the stage of Arhat [enlightened mendicant].

8. Kilesappahana (in this stage all the base qualities of the mind, namely lust, sloth, malice, etc., are entirely removed).
9. Vinivaranata (at this stage all obstacles preventing to the enlightenment are removed).
10. Sunnagare Abhirati (here one finds a state of bliss or delight where the soul is perfectly alone. This comes after reaching the complete and perfect stage or goal of meditation).

As we have pointed out before, Samadhi in both the Samkhya system and in the Buddhist system, is mostly equated with the idea of intense concentration and both systems have attempted to describe this state of concentration; it is considered either as a state or a process or an attainment.

Both systems lay emphasis on the concept that Samadhi is a state in a process. Yet it is considered as a state of attainment also. In the Buddhist system Samadhi is defined as Chittassaekaggata. Literally this means one-pointed concentrativeness of Citta (mind stuff). What exactly Citta is has not been fully or clearly described by the Buddhists. Nevertheless, they have given details of the mental states experienced through meditation from which we can get a glimpse of their concept.

However, in the Samkhya system we find similar detailed descriptions together with a more concise explanation of Citta; but we can safely say that in Buddhism, Samadhi means a state of right and proper concentration leading to Samapatti, Vipassana and finally to Nirvana.

Both the Samkhya and the Buddhist system clearly say that there are different grades of Samadhi. However, the Samkhya system says that a state of Samadhi comes even in a state of extreme anger or hatred when a person attains an extreme concentration of the mind on one idea or object to the exclusion of everything else. From this view, even through the use of hypnotic drugs, etc., this state of Samadhi (intense concentration) can be experienced.

But the Buddhists say that concentration of mind through these extraneous influences which induce the mind to a state of trance, although one-pointed, is not Samadhi. The Buddhists and the author both agree that Samadhi must be achieved through a deliberate, conscious effort by the subject or soul for the purpose of attaining a higher concept of knowledge which leads to liberation by whatever term it may be called.

In other words, Samadhi is always a positive state of action, not a passive one that just occurs from the pressure of outer stimulants. Samadhi is achieved when man does his spiritual practices with a purpose; it comes only through a voluntary effort and it is not a process or state of action wherein man is automatically made to act.

In the first two chapters, we have clearly noted that there are some anomalies, some divergent opinions and conceptions as to the ideal and state of Samadhi. On the whole, whatever else may be indicated, it is generally agreed that Samadhi is an act of concentration. This, however, does not preclude other incidental difficulties that have been evident in the various conceptions.

For example, there is no universal view as to whether it is an act or a process of concentration or whether it is a state arrived at following a mature state of concentration, or whether it is something achieved through some process which leads to a certain state of concentration.

The seers of the past recorded their experiences, but should have shown the consideration to give us a proper delineation whereby weak-hearted and small-brained people of posterity could peep into these profound truths so relevant to the journey to infinity even before they had disciplined their minds through the extensive practices which these seers had perfected; at any rate, they not only have not done this as a convenience to us, but they have further complicated their own records by using certain words and expressions to convey several different meanings.

This becomes more and more apparent as we proceed in our discussion of the Buddhist school. For example, when the Theraveda school of Buddhism classified Samadhi into several groups, they used the following terms: Ceto-Samatha, Citta-Bhavana, Citta-Visuddhi, Adhicitta and Vipassana.*

All of these denote a specific kind of meditation that brings a specific result. The first, Ceto-Samatha is a practice and experience of knowing past and present experiences. It is a state of meditation and practice through which a person can know the events of his early life as well as the events in his previous births. It will be found, therefore, that in a subtle and indirect way, it includes the knowledge of something.

Hence, it is a kind of Samadhi or concentration which is itself a process, an act or a state where something is to be arrived at; the student of the Samkhya system will at once recognize that a similar practice has been prescribed in the Patanjal system and if it is appreciated that the Patanjal system is much older than the Buddhist system, then it must be appreciated that these practices have been copied from the Patanjal-Samkhya school.

The second state, Ceto Vimutti, is a state which culminates in Nirvana. In this state supreme knowledge is envisioned as a necessary requisite in the state of Nirvana, which is the greatest credit and the highest fruit that is sought in Arhatship (Buddhist renunciate). It should be noted, however, that Vipassana literally means full inner knowledge, or to penetrate or to see deeply into an object. The Buddhists themselves call it Panna or knowledge—vision of the whole inside of the Cosmic world.

Vipassana is of course a higher category than Ceto-Samadhi. The other states emphasize, each in their own way, a certain aspect of attainment. For example, Ceto

*See *Buddhist Meditation Theory and Practice* by Paravahera Vujirana Mahathera, Ph.D. Cantab, Published by MD Gunasena & Co. Ltd., Colombo, pp. 20-23.

Vimutti indicates a mind freed from impurities and error. Ceto-Samatha is a straightforwared one-pointedness of mind that brings a sustained inward serenity. Citta-Bhavana is a state and practice wherein mastery over the mind is achieved; in other words, the emphasis is on the control of the mind.

A Citta-Visuddhi frees the mind from all passions. In this state the mental quiescence or tranquillity of mind is given more importance; hence in this state, Samadhi is looked upon as a mood and not as a process or act.

The reader will have noticed that no pain has been spared to emphasize our view that Buddhist meditation and the goal of attaining Nirvana through Samadhi (a state of intense concentration) has been copied almost verbatim from the Samkhya-Patanjal system. We also want to say that in our opinion this does not in any way detract from the value of the Buddhist system. However, although the Buddhist system does differ somewhat in the theoretical aspect from the Samkhya system, both attain very nearly the same concept under different terminology.

We have stated that following the Samkhya system, the Buddhist school classifies Samadhi in stages according to the method of meditation and according to the objects used in meditation. For example, the Samkhya system calls these states:

Samprajnata (habitually one-pointed)

Samprajnana (closeness of mind)

Savitarka (meditation taking the help of words)

Nirvitarka (meditation without taking the help of words)

Similarly, the Buddhist system names similar states as:

Vitakka (meditation by reasoning)

Vicara (meditation through investigation on inner plane)

Piti (happy enthusiasm in meditation)

Sukha (pleasurable peace coming with detachment to worldly involvement)

Ekaggata (one-pointedness in meditation)

We are pointing out here that in both systems the goal is to be achieved through the conscious control of mind which comes through various disciplines. In both systems this practice starts with more gross objects and progresses to more and more subtle ones until the process of meditation itself becomes more and more subtle.

To sum up, we should note that in both the Samkhya and in the Buddhist system the highest principle is to meditate concentratedly, and the measure of success is marked as the aspirant moves in his meditation to more and more subtle objects and from concrete ideas to abstract ones. For example, in both systems each new stage of meditation is marked when one gross object is replaced by a less gross object.

In each stage there is Samadhi in both the Buddhist and the Samkhya system and the hierarchy of Samadhi depends on the subtlety of the meditation in both of the systems. With the development of the Yogic processes and systems in both post-Patanjal and post-Buddhist periods, the followers of both schools sometimes succumbed to the temptation of psychic, Yogic or occult powers and therefore, instead of pursuing the highest abstract principles and ideals of these respective schools of thought, many advocated meditation for the lesser objective of gaining occult powers in some particular and special way.

The term Samadhi has been used in both schools to indicate a state of, and a process for, intense concentration. This state then in turn leads to the attainment of spiritual insight that becomes progressively deeper, more profound and more subtle as the aspirant passes from one stage to another.

Each stage of Samadhi leads to higher stages which are termed as Samapatti or as Vipassana. The goal in both systems is to extricate the soul from the clutch of Prakriti (Nature) and the Samkhya school calls this stage Kabala. The Buddhists call this stage Nirvana.

Thus we find that as far as the philosophy and methods of meditation and ideals of spiritual practice go, the Buddhists did not contribute much new thought. They presented the ideals and practices propounded by the Samkhya system much earlier but under a different banner. The Buddhists have also enriched their thought by borrowing from the Vedanta school and in particular from the *Kathopanisad*. For example, in the *Samyutta Nikaya* (iv.217) the steps in meditation lead to the goal of detachment from worldly involvement.

Similarly in *Kathopanisad* third chapter, verse 10, 11 and 13 we find almost verbatim the system of following the more gross objects to the more subtle ones to finally reach the goal. The Buddhists say that when Jhana (the initial phase of meditation) is accomplished, the Jhani (one who meditates) is free from speech, and that this comes only after the five obstacles are removed.

In the next higher stage he is free from Vitakka (reasoning) and Vicara (power of uttering words); next he is free from breathing in and out. This state is also described in the 6th chapter of the *Gita*. Since Buddha's first teachers were of the Samkhya-Patanjal school of Yoga, it is certainly natural that the Buddhist practices should follow a similar line.

However, Buddhism did instigate many valuable reforms. Credit must go to this system for laying stress and emphasis on moral values that had been put aside by other Indian systems of that day. No doubt we find that cultivation of morality is the fundamental basis on which all the schools of thought insist. However, Buddha has given much importance to this prerequisite for fruitful meditation; the Buddhists thereafter and also the Jains (Jainism is a way of life emphasizing ritualistic practices and following a strict moral and physical pattern) put extra emphasis on the cultivation of moral values as the foremost requisite for successful and effective meditation.

The importance of moral values was carried side by side with the art and science of meditation. Since Jainism does not offer any original thought on the process of

meditation and the goal of Samadhi, it will not be the purpose of this book to discuss their philosophy and methods in detail.

The Buddhist school says that from the platform of morality, the state of concentration through the disciplines of meditation reaches a mature state which is called Samadhi. This act of concentration leads to higher and higher spiritual realization and finally to Nirvana; thereafter the business and purpose and function of Samadhi comes to a halt, so to speak. The Samkhya school also entertains this same concept.

Again the question is asked by the author: is this the end of the goal of human life? Is this the destiny of the universe, to come to a halting place? Should all of life come one day to a glorified blissful lion's den, where everything enters and nothing or no one ever comes back?

There is no answer to these questions in either the Samkhya or the Buddhist system; they left what is to be next to be proclaimed by posterity—or by subsequent Incarnations of God.

TIBETAN BUDDHISM

Tibetan Buddhism claims to be the only complete form of Buddhism. It claims it is complete because it includes Mahayana, Hinayana and Tantra.

This approach is a fusion of Buddhism, Tantrism and a special kind of logic. Their ideal is compassion to all sentient beings, with no scope for love to any Divine Being as a Person. In fact, there is no place in their philosophy for one Creator, and it does not allow for duality; the oneness found in the qualities of Buddhahood is not explained. There are, according to them, millions of Buddhas all expressing in individual ways these qualities of Buddhahood. These are latent in all sentient beings and the individuals who have achieved Buddhahood

will come back, from time to time, to lead all sentient beings to the realization thereof.

It is to be specially noticed that they are the only Buddhist school wherein Tantrism is practiced. It is the view of His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, that the origin of the Tantrik Tibetan is from the teachings of the Buddha himself. However, we cannot trace in any other of the earliest Buddhist schools any Tantrik principles or practices as such. Whatever may be the source of the present day concepts and practices, we do find in Tibetan Buddhism certain original aspects not found in any other Buddhist school.

They say that to know the Dharma of the Lord Buddha and to understand the quiescence of it is the way to happiness and escape from Duhkha. His Holiness, the Dalai Lama explains *Duhkha* as all unsatisfactory experience and *Dharma* as that which upholds one's right efforts (Samyak) when one practices in accordance with them.

Dharma must be applied in all of life and for this aim Tibetan Buddhism offers many practices, both in positive and negative ways, to help the aspirant to achieve his Dharma. Additionally, as we have already pointed out, there is the influence of Tantrism in the Buddhist philosophy. Pure Tantra envisions a Divine Creative play of Shakti, the Divine Mother.

While some Buddhist schools say that Nirvana ends the whole Cosmic Show, the Tibetan Buddhists say that with the achievement of the perfect wisdom in Nirvana, the individual being, then freed from all duality, lives on in a body (not like that of human beings now but a body that cannot be described in words)—in a heaven-type world where there is neither suffering nor unhappiness. All sentient beings, they say, will one day reach this state of Buddhahood.

Whatever the goal to achieve, the Tibetans—like their other Buddhist brothers—obviously borrowed part of this concept from the Samkhya-Patanjal system. Simultaneous-

ly, there are found some Tantrik practices derived from different *Agamas* (one of the sciences of Tantra). Tibetan Buddhism has adopted only that aspect of Tantra which deals with Mantras and deities. With the help of these practices, they acquire occult powers, or Siddhis, but the concept of Shakti viewed exclusively as Divine Motherhood does not appear.

His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, explained to the author that when one qualifies in a certain Samadhi, control over the four elements results, and on this basis certain miraculous powers are possible such as travel through space or through fire. Other types of Samadhi can also be practiced to acquire qualities such as wisdom and spiritual insight.

But one thing is sure: without the practice of Samadhi, which is an instrument for achieving some further end and which is to be considered as intense concentration, nothing of importance in Buddhism is gained and one certainly cannot reach Nirvana, from there to go on to Buddhahood.

The practice of Mantra (abridged words in sound to achieve a certain end) is also taken from the Tantrik school. According to His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, the ultimate or real Mantra is wisdom. In order to achieve the goal, certain Mantras are recited such as *Aum Mani Padme Hum*. These words represent body, speech and mind and through utterance of this Mantra, the impure body, speech and mind are purified; there are also somewhat more subtle and deeper implications.

The influence of Tantra brought about the introduction of gods, goddesses and deities. One class of Tantrik deities seem to exist permanently as a manifestation of certain qualities, powers or attributes of the Buddha himself. This can be compared to the Vedic conception of gods presiding over different powers of nature. A second class of deities is said to come into form or existence through the devotee's practice and aspiration.

These deities can assume concrete forms arriving out of human imagination, but nevertheless with the power of

giving positive results. To summarize, the Tibetan Buddhists have found a way to help the human mind grasp abstract concepts with the help of images. Their system of employing Tantrik principles and techniques, although not exclusively following the basic thought of viewing Shakti as the Divine Mother, the creator, preserver and destroyer, is a valuable and important contribution to human thought.

It is quite evident that the Tantrism found in Tibetan Buddhism is borrowed here and there from the Tantra school in India, and thereafter fashioned in a way to make it fit the concepts and aims of their goal. Whether or not these practices and concepts were given by the Buddha himself or whether the early Buddhists found a necessity to include them in their system to achieve the goal does not detract from their value.

Like other schools of Buddhism, the Tibetans see all the world and everything in it as transitory. The soul as a stationary, fixed consciousness is not accepted. They do say, however, that the reality of man is *being* or consciousness which is perpetually changing with every experience. Although they do not hold with the concept of a permanent soul, they do say that there is a sort of permanent-impermanent focal point of *being* which is perpetually changing, and which functions much like the soul as conceived by other schools of thought. In other words, instead of a permanent soul they say that there is a permanent stream of consciousness which seems to be perpetual.

They further say, like the other Buddhists, that the source of all trouble is this: desire is the root cause for misery, and desire for mundane things comes through the senses. To achieve Nirvana and beyond, they want to escape the powers and influence of these senses.

In contrast to this, the Tantriks would say that it is better to embrace the world as the manifestation of the Divine Mother. If the worldly objects are illusory or deceptive and are nothing but the Cosmic Mother in Her

play, why should we avoid them, and in fact how can we avoid them? At least so long as we have a body-consciousness why should we try to shun it? A true Tantrik says: "Let us embrace the world as the play of the Cosmic Mother and She cannot deceive us at all."

The Tibetan system has said *no* to this; it is better to negate the worldly desires and all sufferings, and that when this is successful there comes a cessation of births and deaths. In brief, they envision a new type of existence—perhaps on this planet or on another planet—and in their compassion, those achieving Buddhahood will incarnate in the bodies of both animals and men until all sentient beings achieve the state of Buddhahood.

When Lord Buddha was asked in his last days about God and heaven, he was silent. Perhaps he could say no more because in those days it was beyond human conception to appreciate higher truth—or it may be that he was implying that Nirvana or enlightenment leads to a place from which no one could go further, neither could any come back. Or perhaps Lord Buddha was indicating that what is there is beyond speech.

At any rate, the Tibetan Buddhists do not hold with the school of thought that all ends in the vagueness of Nirvana. Here again we see the infusion of the flavor of Tantrik thought in this concept that the Play goes on in some form even after the achievement of Buddhahood. Buddhahood is described as a state of *being* of an individual focal point where there is no Duhkha (no suffering, no trouble, no failure in achieving desire, no unsatisfactory experience—nothing of the kind). It is a stage full of complete enlightenment.

To some extent, this solves the destiny of human beings and animals, but it may be only a penultimate solution to the overall Cosmic Play, destiny and purpose; but Tibetan and other Buddhist schools offer no satisfactory solution for either the goal or purpose of the Cosmic Universe. Although all Buddhists agree that there is nothing permanent, they do not explain the destiny or

play of the Cosmic world. In fact, their philosophy has been completely devoid of such inquiry.

Since all Buddhist schools, however, say that everything is transitory in a passing show, and that this is a continuous show, *ad infinitum*, it seems that some sort of solution should be given to the Cosmic world itself. They say that there is no duality at all, and this presupposes that the Cosmic World with all its seeming variations is really one changing reality.

Then where or what does this change lead to? And if there is no duality, then man is a part of this Cosmic world. If Dharma is considered as "that which upholds one's rightful efforts when one practices in accordance with it" (page 142 in *The Opening of the Wisdom Eye* by His Holiness Tenzin Gyatsho, the XIVth Dalai Lama), and it is known as the power of Lord Buddha himself—in whom there is no duality—then the principle on which human life is to be modelled and to be followed should not ignore the mundane world as considered in its totality. This negligence ultimately acts as a boomerang to the effort of discovering the destiny of the human being.

All Buddhist schools except Zen lay stress on lofty ideals of moral conduct both as a philosophy and as a physical approach for spiritual realization. These schools appreciate that the method of right action alone is a very slow practice, wherein liberation can be achieved only after many, many lifetimes; they have supplemented this effort with some exact practices fashioned to bring the mind under control and to free man from what, in English, is called the five senses. In Tibetan these are known as the five heaps which are the five sense bases plus the five outer objects (see page 37 of *The Opening of the Wisdom Eye* referred to above).

Samadhi is achieved when a certain stage of equilibrium is attained and the mind is free from the influences of the heaps. Meditation techniques follow (with a few variations) the pattern in general of the

Theraveda school which we have explained in detail above when dealing with Theraveda.

His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, beautifully told this author that Samadhi is a tool for the achievement of something higher.

Samadhi is of different grades and for different goals.

Samadhi is also described in the Tibetan thought as *collectedness of mind*. There are several gradations of this state. The first of these is termed as Upacara-Samadhi. This state is achieved when the five hindrances—sensual desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, worry and remorse, and skepticism—are suppressed. The second stage comes when the mind becomes absorbed in its object; this level of attainment of collectedness is called Arpana Samadhi. This state of absorption in collectedness can be of two kinds: worldly and transcendental. The first kind of Samadhi leads to some sort of worldly result such as calmness or worldly happiness. Arpana Samadhi aims at freedom.

The above is only a brief survey of the vast divisions and subdivisions found in the Tibetan system. We encourage any of our readers who want to pursue further this system of thought and practice to acquaint themselves with *The Opening of the Wisdom Eye* and other books written recently by His Holiness, the Dalai Lama. At Dharamsala, in the foothills of the Himalayas in India, the Tibetan Buddhists have established a college wherein the principles and methods, which have so long been inaccessible to outsiders, are taught today to the serious aspirant.

Although the Buddhists have taken the psychological basis of their thought from the Samkhya system, they have developed it further and are now offering it to the world in a different complex. Yet it appears less scientific in some of the details than the original Samkhya system. For example, the Tibetan school is a bit hazy on the concept of mind itself. They have, however, taken much trouble to set out the powers and functions of mental activity and to develop methods to control the Chitta

(mind stuff that reflects mental modifications). They employ techniques in common with the Samkhya and other Buddhist schools.

We must remember that Lord Buddha exposed and eliminated certain evils and errors that had crept into Hinduism, but through the influence of his Gurus he extracted the basic scientific principles of Hindu scriptures, and fashioned them to his own philosophy and system of practice to meet the needs of that day. In the centuries that followed, Buddhism spread to various countries and thereafter took shape according to the originality of the peoples living there. Thus to discover what it offers to man in the world now we should view the Tibetan Buddhist system as unique in its own way.

The author wants to summarize the valuable contribut-tion made by the Tibetan Buddhist school. They rightly emphasize—perhaps more strongly than the other Buddhist schools—that no progress in spiritual goals can be made without purity. For example, they have emphasized that the Noble Eight-fold Path showing that perfect understanding, examination, speech, attainment, livelihood, effort, mindfulness and collectedness must be achieved as a basis for any further attainment. Perfect collectedness, achieved at this stage, is termed Samyak Samadhi and this Samadhi serves as a tool to forge one's way further and further along the path.

They have responded to the need for man to turn all his sense organs to spiritual practices, so that he can quickly and easily extricate himself from Nature's pull. And perhaps most important of all, they have removed the road block at the end of Nirvana found in the other Buddhist schools, and have pointed out the good of living in a new and higher state as a Buddha.

But what then? They do not say.

ZEN BUDDHISM

Zen Buddhism considers itself as having existence separate from Buddhism. It classifies itself as an advanced school of thought which gives the fruit of achieving *now*. Enlightenment or Satori, they say, is simply the art of being. Its main approach is psychological. In essence it claims to be exclusively nonanalytical.

For instance, the following example is often given: the aspirant is asked to perceive the rose that is before him. If he wants to get an experience of the rose in the usual way through an analytical process which is a mental process, he will dissect the rose or separate it into its many qualities; he will contemplate its color, fragrance, shape, origin, etc. In so doing he tries to experience the rose in all its multifarious existences or states of expressions, but each according to his individual idea of what he perceives.

Zen says this is a wrong approach. This analytical way of experiencing a thing or an object is nothing but the subject's imposition of his own experience on the object itself. They say that the rose can be known only when these subjective views on the object are rejected. Only when the rose is known objectively and synthetically can it be known for what it really is.

In other words, this way of viewing is actually the first step in the process of dissolving the ego-consciousness. This method instructs the aspirant to dissolve the ego-consciousness of the subject first. They say: "Let the rose appear to you as it really is without any subjugation on your part of your own concepts or experiences."

They describe this state of meditation as *artistic creativity* and at the same time they say that it opens the unconscious and the subconscious mind to the appearance and reality of the rose which then will reveal itself com-

pletely in its own true nature. This approach bears some similarity to the theories of Berkeley, Locke and Kant.

The goal of Zen Buddhism is quite clear. They seek Satori or enlightenment. They say, however, that there are stages of enlightenment or awareness of truth or true being which are revealed gradually when the aspirant goes deeper and deeper into thought through meditation.

Let us say here that although the Zen philosophers claim that their system of practice, with its achievement in the now, is an improvement over the original Buddhist system, they offer no substitute for the analysis and psychology of the system of meditation which is comprehensive and diverse in the Buddhist school.

The psychological terms used in the Buddhist school and especially in the Theraveda and the Tibetan Buddhist schools—who also have as their goal to go to the center rather than out to the circumference—are comprehensive and explicit. A Zen monk does not involve himself in a detailed discussion of any psychological concepts, and we cannot find any substitute in this philosophy that helps the aspirant to achieve the goal that he has in common with the Theraveda school, i.e. to dilute his soul with the soul of the object of meditation. Both try to bring oneness between the individual soul and the object he is trying to experience.

The Zen approach is, they say, a natural one which goes beyond the mind. By this they mean their aim is to eliminate what they see as the unnatural dualistic view of life, through achieving a state of nonthinking. The emphasis and practice is to experience this oneness. For example, they want to experience in a nondualistic way like the birds flying in the sky—naturally and completely. In such an experience, the manifold concepts and precepts become one through being compressed in the unconscious regions, and there are no longer repression or thought impressions lurking in the mind.

Since all effort is toward this aim, there is no emphasis on any prerequisites for their practice. There is al-

so no worship nor any sacrifice to any Cosmic Power, *with or without form.*

In experiencing Satori, all pent-up feelings go and the mind no longer contains any suppression or objective motivation or feelings. There is neither suffering nor other urges to torment the mind. When there is complete merging of one's being with the object or with the universe as a whole—whatever the goal to be achieved through a mental state—it is called Satori. It is described as a thunderous silence, a state of silence that is both eloquent and profound.

In that state of silence and peace of mind, the Truth proclaims itself thunderously. This cannot be described in words but can only be experienced through Zen meditation. The system is, first of all, psychoanalytical. Second, the aim is to comprehend the object of meditation both objectively and synthetically. Third, Satori or enlightenment, whatever be the connotation or denotation of the term, is the only goal of life which gives peace and joy while at the same time giving some enlightenment. Hence the contribution of Zen naturally has some credit due so far as the modern school of thought is concerned.

Zen hesitates to say anything about God. Like the Buddhists, they say in effect: "Let God remain in peace. We won't bother Him. If there be a God (and actually Nirvana or Satori or enlightenment is only another side or name of Godhood) be it so. And even if there is not, it doesn't matter." The achievement of Nirvana or Satori is the thing. Whether you call sugar by its name or not doesn't matter; if you get it by any name, it will taste as sweet.

Perhaps, in a sense, Zen is right in not speaking, because we cannot say by words anything about God. The more we say, the less we express. That is why Zen says that the intellectual approach is a wrong conception; or as Spinoza would say, the aim is to gain knowledge through intuition rather than through intellect. It is this principle of avoiding the conscious use of the mind that

no doubt serves as a justification for not developing terms and mental concepts that support and explain their method and system of meditation.

This avoidance of explaining the system does, no doubt, make it difficult for one who has not yet achieved results to form any concrete idea of their methods and any valid evaluation of their usefulness. We can only say here that each system should be judged by its fruits. Since every man is individual in himself, it is only natural that various systems, however akin in goal, will have to be developed to serve the individual tendencies of man.

Zen Buddhism in Japan is a revival of Buddhism as it existed in the days of Sakyamuni Buddha. This school of thought was introduced as an action and practice to awaken the Buddhi nature in man. The method and approach was somewhat modified to fit the oriental nature of the Chinese and Japanese and thus there are some differences of approach between the Buddhism that comes out of India and that which migrated from China to Japan under the name of Zen Buddhism. The major differences between these schools is that the former puts emphasis on the Eightfold Path of Righteousness as the first and preliminary step to practice, and the latter advises seeking enlightenment first, wherein everything else will fall into place.

There are three different schools of Zen Buddhism in Japan today. According to their time of origin and the numbers of their followers they are:

Yossi (1141-1215) founded the Rinzai Zen sect. The Kenninji Temple in Kyoto is the headquarters of the Kenninji school of Rinzai Zen. Their school advocates the Koan or riddle technique. Dogen (1200-1253) founded the Soto Zen sect. The Eiheiji temple is the present headquarters of the Soto. Ingen (1592-1673) founded the Obaku school of Zen Buddhism. Although each of these schools has its own system for achieving the goal, they also have in common the goal of Satori which is experienced through spontaneous truth.

Satori comes from the continuous flashing of new virgin truth, which springs from a source beyond the rational mind. It brings a sense of being which is beyond all duality. This mood of being—or oneness without duality—is for the person who has achieved Satori the dominant force in every detail of his life.

In itself the Koan system aims at rendering the rational, intellectual thinking process of man useless, since it considers this an obstacle to enlightenment. To accomplish this end, they pose nonsensical riddles to the mind until the mind gives way to an emptiness in which a sudden illumination comes in the experience of Satori.

Another school of Zen gives only one instruction: to watch the thoughts go through the mind until the mind is finally empty, and as nothing remains empty, the Cosmic Truth fills this space to give an experience of Satori. When this experience becomes habitual, then the state of Satori is accomplished. They say that first one sees the mountains, then the mountains go, and then again, after Satori, the mountains are there again, but now they exist in a new harmony.

In neither of these systems is there any conscious concentrated effort to control or to understand the mind. In this way, although the process and the goal is much like the earlier schools of the Saṁkhya-Patanjal school and of the other Buddhist schools, they seek the same goal without the help of understanding and exploring exactly what is happening at each step as the goal is achieved.

However it may be, we cannot help but regret that so little is said by the Zen school about their psychological approach of meditation for gaining Satori. In our humble opinion, the Zen monk should not retire to the antechamber of his meditative place and simply admonish *Meditate and you will know yourself.*

Instead, the moment he claims to have discovered a new idea or thought process that is a *summum bonum* of human life, and testifies that he has arrived at that state, there should be no secret of this process; names and

terminologies to explain the process or experience he has discovered should be offered to others whose aspiration is the same. No such achievement in the spiritual field is for one man alone. Therefore, in this respect we expect much more narrative and description of the process to Satori from the Zen Buddhists themselves.

They say that in knowing the rose that is before you, you are to be the rose; then there is no more separation or idea left in the mind as to what the rose was considered from the position of the subject, who now is the rose. The goal is to be one idea without ideas. Although they say that this process does not involve thinking, we venture to say that to think of nonthinking *is* a process of thinking. In other words, the thinking is this instance is done on the *nonthinking*.

So we see there are some anomalies in this thought. The moment we say that we think, we must think in name and form. At least until a very advanced stage is reached, any idea or thought must have a name and form, even if that form is nonthinking. This is the nature of the mind and until the mind arrives at a state of complete dissolution into the Cosmic Mind, it will think in name and form. That is why until we cross the barrier of mental images and intellectual concepts, to the intuitive realization or experience and go further, to the supramental stage of realization which the Vedantists call Shanta Atman, we have to think, we have to speak, and we have to express in terms of names and forms.

Only when we go beyond these mental stages, including that of the intellect, can we have an experience which contains no ideas, no concepts. What this experience is no one can tell, because it is truly beyond names and forms. That is why when a person has the experience of Samadhi or Satori or Nirvana he cannot tell his experience. As the *Vedas* say, when mind comes back, it is baffled. When speech comes back, it is baffled to express that state of Samadhi.

Sri Ramakrishna expressed this beautifully when He

said that only God-realization is not contaminated by speech. Everything else is. But God-realization, in whatever state it may be, in whatever kind of Samadhi, can never be expressed in language. Therefore it cannot be contaminated by words. So in this context, the Zen Buddhists are right in not trying to express the experience of oneness of being.

We do not differ in this respect. Our only regret is that there are no explanations of the step-by-step experiences leading to this state, or terms to explain concepts that serve as a landmark for others, such as have been used by the Vedantists and the Samkhyists and the other schools.

Zen says that a chair as it appears before you is not really what the chair is; what the mind registers as a series of thoughts and impressions is only a reflection from stimulants and past experiences in the gross world. But there is something more that, in reality, produces this chair. It is not the wood or color or paint or shape. It is more. But what?

Zen says to know this *something more* the subjectivity must go. What the chair is cannot be experienced except in the absence of subjectivity; when dualistic thoughts go, the separateness no longer exists. The Samkhyists agree that this is true; they also say that the chair is something more. What? It is a subtle object made up of Tanmatras and it is these which produce the gross chair that one normally experiences. In Samkhya the steps and experiences from gross to subtle are explained by showing how these can be experienced through an analytical process which leads to synthesis—from subjectiveness to objectiveness—or from the partial to a view of the whole.

In explaining how one can experience this synthesis, Samkyha gives names for each stage in the mental process as it goes from gross to subtle, it traces a gross object to more subtle, abstract reality until it comes to the source of Cosmic Energy or Prakriti, the primordial ma-

trix out of which all existences and objects are created. These gross objects are simply the phenomenal world as it appears to the mind.

The Samkhya system is very thorough in the way in which psychological steps in meditation have been developed. We have already explained how they have given names to describe how this involvement in the gross world came about, and how by following the gross to the subtle, they come to the source, which they call Prakriti.

At this point we feel constrained to note that the Samkhyists and Patanjalists consciously use mind as a tool to achieve this end and the Zen Buddhists try to achieve the same by dissolving the mind. They try to ignore its nature and the science of the way it works. If they feel that the mind is to be ignored, then of course they would not be consistent if they used words which are the tools of the mind, to explain the steps in meditation to achieve the goal.

They aim to dissolve into the object, thus effacing all previous impressions; the ego or *I-ness* no longer has a scope. To experience the object, to efface the ego—this is Satori. In the Samkhya system and in the *Vedas* a state similar to Satori is called Videha or Maha Videha Bhava.

Following are some examples of their method of teaching through stories:

"A man is hanging on a tree branch; a poisonous snake is moving toward the branch. At a close distance a lion is watching and under his feet lies a profound and silent abyss. Zen says there are no words, no thoughts, no concepts that can help him. He has first to let go and let go is all he has to do."

....

Another:

"A famous scholar went to visit a Zen master. The master started preparing tea and kept silent while the scholar asked many questions. When the tea was ready, the master started pouring it into the scholar's cup.

'Be careful, Sir,' said the scholar, 'the cup is running over.'

'So is your mind,' answered the Zen Master. 'First empty your cup, Sir. ' "

....

Another:

"Two Zen monks were on a journey when they came near a river. They saw a young and very beautiful woman trying to cross it. She knew not what to do, and when she could find no way, the first monk took her in his arms and carried her across. The woman thanked him and went on her way. The two Zen monks continued travelling until nightfall. Then they stopped to sleep.

'How dare you to hold a woman in your arms!' asked the angry monk.

'You are holding her even now. I left her after crossing the river.' was the soft reply."

....

Another:

"A disciple came to a Zen master and asked: 'Has a dog the Buddha nature?'

"Mu (emptiness), answered the master."

ADVAITA VEDANTA

Vedanta literally means the end of the *Vedas*. More specifically, it means the philosophy that follows the *Vedas*.

Advaita means nondualistic. The *Vedas* themselves are so vast and the interpretations so varied that different schools of thought have sprung up.

The Advaita Vedantists are among those schools of thought which believe in the nondualistic nature of the whole Cosmos including the Supreme Being as God. This school teaches that the Absolute (one nondual state of Supreme Being) is the Reality and the world in its differentiation is unreal. Here *unreal* does not mean nonexistent. Rather it means it is relatively of less importance.

This school of thought is in the main based on the *Upanishads* as well as the *Brahma Sutra* as interpreted by Samkara (also written as Samkhara), who is the chief proponent of this school of thought. Since we are not dealing here principally in philosophy of religion, we shall turn our attention to those aspects that relate only to the subject of Samadhi.

Even the *Upanishads* themselves offer several different schools of thought in the conception of the nondualist aspect of the Supreme Being. It naturally follows that amongst the Advaita Vedantists also there are varied opinions. Here we shall consider only those which according to us contribute the most to spiritual thought.

It is said by the Advaita Vedantists that reason and intellect have a limited scope and through these factors the Supreme Reality or the Absolute cannot be realized or known. The highest Reality can only be known through higher intuition.

They say that the Jiva (individual soul) is just like a spark out of the fire that returns to the fire when the spark realizes that in fact it is part and parcel of the fire itself. Or it is just like a river starting its origin from the vapor of the ocean. At first, vapor coming from the ocean forms a cloud; through showers, this vapor condenses into drops falling as water or snow on mountain and plateau, it then goes into the river to return to the ocean. When it reaches the ocean it realizes at long last that its origin lies there and it is full of delightful bliss (Ananda).

They classify consciousness into four stages. The first stage is the normal consciousness when a person is aware of the world. This consciousness includes both the outside world and that within. In this state a person eats, works and moves about. The second stage is sleep with dreams. In this stage most of the voluntary functions of the body stop. The thought that comes out of the sleep state arises from previous impressions, with or without some new stimuli. The third stage is dreamless sleep. This is given

some importance by the Vedantists as being a higher state in which something can be contributed to the overall aspiration in spiritual life. It is considered as a linking stage to supraconsciousness or Samadhi.

It is as if in this dreamless sleep stage the soul has partially freed itself from the bondage of nature and is now free to soar into the horizon beyond the body. In this state all bodily activity stops, including thought and consciousness, and only the involuntary action of the body continues. It is just like a bird which has a long thread tied to its leg; the bird is thus allowed to fly for a distance in the sky but eventually it has to come back with the pull of the string. It is further claimed that some occult powers such as knowing future events, etc., can arise in this dreamless sleep. Also in this state there may come new spiritual realization and experience very much akin to Samadhi.

Turiya is the fourth and, of course, the most important stage; in it, Samadhi can be experienced. It can be described as a restful state of mind and body wherein the mind is not oppressed by any sensory desires or impulses. Through concentration and meditation the mental modifications are stopped and the consciousness transcends the mental state, the intellectual state and perhaps the lower intuitive state. At this stage the experience of Samadhi comes, wherein the soul realizes the Cosmic Truth or Reality. This is the crux of the philosophy of the Advaita Vedantists.

Like the Samkhya Yoga school, this school also recommends some ethical code of conduct and preparatory physical requisites leading to spiritual practice. Spiritual practices include consulting a Guru or others on this truth; reading, thinking and pondering over what has been told and read; then meditating according to specified instruction. Up to this point it goes hand-in-hand with the Samkhya Yoga system, but unlike Samkhya it does not delineate or describe in full the details and process of meditation and of the objects to be used while so

engaged. What happens in the stages of meditation and in Samadhi are also not set out.

Samadhi is put into two broad divisions. One is delineated as qualified and the other as unqualified. Vedantists say that except for Incarnations and other exceptions, the finite souls which once plunge into the Cosmic sea cannot come back into worldly consciousness at all. The meditation process goes on intellectually, while trying to discover the true nature of the Jiva (individual soul) and how it relates to the Absolute.

This is called the negative process of *neti neti* (not this, not this). Sometimes help is also taken from some abstract thought which develops into a state of concentration whereby a state of realization comes when the world with form and names disappear. With this unqualified state, an experience results which is termed Nirvikalpa Samadhi. This Samadhi would be between the Manomayakosha and the Vijnanamayakosha, or according to one school between the Vijnanamayakosha and the Anandamayaskosha.

The best clue to meditation as practiced by this school is found in the *Kathopanisad*. (See chapter 3, vs. 10-11). Here the hierarchy of all the things in the Cosmos is discussed and graded from gross to subtle. Following the gross world to the senses to the objects to the mind to the Cosmic Soul, we come to the Supreme Absolute which is sometimes called Purusha (Absolute not personified). How to follow this clue to the Purusha is set out in detail in the *Kathopanisad*, and the Advaita Vedantist uses the clues given therein.

To the Advaita Vedantist, Samadhi means the culmination of intense concentration. In the unqualified stage the ego is lost forever, and when it has dissolved into the Cosmic Sea there is no one at all to tell the tale. But in the qualified state, the ego dips into this sea of Ananda (delightful bliss) and it keeps the awareness that I *was meditating,* but it cannot explain what it has experienced in words because during the experience it was

dissolved into the Purusha. All it can say is that it enjoyed a state of blissful joy. The scriptures tell us that Ananda is beyond speech and expression; it can be said only that Ananda is a state of joy, the totality of which constitutes the nature of Brahman.

Up to this point everything is fine. But can the finite being really comprehend Infinity? Can a salt doll venture to plunge into the ocean with the attempt to return again in its original form? In the highest state of Samadhi, however short the time may be, can the meditator retain his identity? There are two schools of thought to give the answer. One says that in the state of Samadhi no one can say even that it is joy or bliss because if one tells of such an experience, that presupposes that there was still an individual consciousness to take note of the experience or feeling while in that mood; therefore, if the person had really melted or merged with the Cosmic Sea, he could say nothing at all about himself (who according to him did not exist then) in that state.

The other school of thought says that the awareness of the Jiva (individual soul) is still there and when normal consciousness returns, he can say that it is a state of stillness and quiescence and nothing else. This is the highest goal according to this school.

There is still another difference of opinion based on verse 23, chapter 2 of the *Kathopanisad*. This tells that "the Atman (Universal Soul) cannot be attained by study of *Vedas* nor intellect nor even by much learning: it is attained by him whom It chooses; this, his (own) Atman, reveals its own (real) form." The controversy that this brings forth is first: can the Soul (Atman) be revealed, then, by the dint of its own endeavor, or, second, can it only be realized when the grace from the Supreme Atman or Absolute showers or falls upon the aspirant? Truly speaking, the orthodox Advaita Vedantist finds it very difficult to accept the theory of grace.

Whatever be the right interpretation, looking from the point of view of Samadhi, we find that just prior to the Supreme realization there is a moment of pause, when

either the aspirant has to marshal all his efforts to achieve the highest goal coming thereafter and to realize what is to come by his own power—or at that crucial moment of pause, he must await the Divine grace. So even in Samadhi there is a crossroad in the penultimate stage where one must wait for a final marshalling of force or grace.

In recent times, a great sage named Ramana Maharshi lived in the South of India in Tiruvannamalai. He expressed his own kind of Advaita Vedanta by instructing those who came to him for inspiration and guidance to ask the question: "Who am I?" over and over again until the answer comes in silence.

This is just one of the many practices that can come from a vast principle such as that on which the Advaita Vedantists base their philosophy and practice. Ramana Maharshi did not follow, as you can see, any of the existing Advaita schools, and still his thought followed more closely theirs than that of other schools.

It is just this way that new schools of practice spring up to achieve a goal already set by existing schools.

But this time we ask the Advaita Vedantists: "Is this the whole story of what happens to the Atman (the finite soul), when it somehow or other is to finally plunge into the Cosmic Ocean, never to return?"

In other words, when the highest Samadhi is attained, can the finite soul take another shape or lose its identity in whatever form it has so long journeyed? Has it any part to play in the Cosmic show except to enjoy a state of bliss and joy? And what happens when all the souls reach Samadhi? Will the Cosmic show cease in a state of bliss, or will there be a repitition of the whole show in the same way to again reach a blissful doomsday when the play will be over and the Absolute will have to think of something new?"

TANTRA

The term *Samadhi*, as such, finds no proper place in Tantra. The goal of realization for all human beings is ultimately the same and Tantra has this value even though its ideal is styled and termed in a different manner.

The exact origin of Tantra is lost in a mysterious antiquity. Many schools of thought claim that Tantra originated from a period as old, if not older, than the *Vedas*. Be that as it may, it is safe to say that it originated from the conception of the creator—or God—through the aspect of motherhood.

From the anthropological point of view, the place of mother precedes that of father as a source of respect and reverence in human thought. Nature gives us generously of comforts, amenities and luxuries in their simplicity. Hence, Nature is called Mother and earth is also called mother. Cows give us milk to foster our nourishment and in India the cow is considered as a holy mother in nature's kingdom. It is only natural that man will tend to think of God first as a benign mother to be loved.

The orthodox point of view in Tantra is therefore based on the motherhood concept of God, with the emphasis on the quality of power (in Sanskrit this is called Shakti) which supplies all our amenities, benefits and nourishment. They also view the mother as more loving and powerful than the father.

The father's place as a Supreme Being has not been neglected in human thought. For example, in Christianity, Christ constantly invoked the Divinity as Heavenly Father. The Shaiva cult in India also called the Heavenly Divine Supreme Being as Father and has named him *Siva*. Recognizing that wherever there is a mother there is a father, Tantra makes an attempt to blend these two concepts: the motherhood and the fatherhood of God,

and calls them Shakti (or Kali) and Siva. Thus, in many Tantrik scriptures we find that Siva is described as father with Shakti as his consort.

Tantra literally means a code or embodiment of spiritual rules, practices, methods and regulations, etc. It comes from the root *Tan* meaning to expand. Here we find the clue to explain the ideal of Tantra as the human effort to expand or broaden the scope of finite consciousness, until it engulfs or comprehends Divine Consciousness. This is the important basis to keep in mind when evaluating Tantrik science.

The advocates of Tantra claim that it is the most comprehensive science in the spiritual field ever presented to humanity by the Divine Power. Although many of the scriptures have been lost, in analyzing Tantra as it stands in India today we can see that the truth it contains has withstood the test of time.

A very pertinent and important feature to be noticed is that all through the years it has remained dynamic. The door has always been kept open for new thought. This quality has kept it a living, spiritual science from its inception.

Tantra has relied on the Samkhya school of thought to explain the Cosmic principles and stages of evolution from gross to subtle. The Samkhya school terms Purusha as a multitude of individual souls and Prakriti as nature; Prakriti is dynamic but it causes delusion or illusion to the individual souls. Tantra has altered this concept to suit its own philosophy as it has developed further from time to time.

In Tantra, Purusha is conceived as One Supreme Purusha in static form, who is none other than Siva Himself. In Tantra, Prakriti or nature is a dynamic force considered as a Mother, Supreme and Divine. She is affectionate, like the human mother we know in our daily life; hence, She can neither deceive nor be illusive.

Next we can see that Tantra takes much from the *Atharva Vedas*. From this source comes the principles of

rites used in worship, as well as the principles of Mantra and other rituals which serve the purpose of attainment both for worldly and other-worldly desires. They also borrowed from the earlier *Vedas* such as Devisukta and Ratrisukta where the Cosmic Player is described as a mother or a female form.

They further enriched their spiritual ideals by including some of the practices and methods of the Patanjal Yoga system. It is even more interesting to note that although the Tibetan Buddhists at first took the concept of deities from the Tantriks and added the practice of propitiating those deities to achieve some favor, at a later stage the Tantriks borrowed back from the Buddhists these concepts and practices and again added their own flavor. Last, but not in any way the least, the Tantrik school has been infused with the system of Bhakti, the devotional approach to Divinity. This originally was taken from the *Puranas* and again adopted and fashioned to fit their particular philosophy and goal.

That Tantra is a comprehensive system of practice for the achievement of spiritual values cannot be ignored. It has taken the essence from all the spiritual practices, old and new. Even though the origin is clouded with antiquity, we find that the devotees who practiced Tantra spread it over almost all of Asia. We find the *Puranas* and other Tantrik scriptures in Cambodia, Java, Sumatra, Nepal, China, Mongolia, and, on the western side, Persia and Iraq. It has, of course, spread all over India, even though many times Tantra is practiced under different names.

Siva, the Father aspect of Divinity, is claimed by some to be a historical personage who lived somewhere near Kailas in Tibet. No doubt today there is much symbolism mixed with any factual history which has survived the test of time. The story of Siva as related below should be read in this context.

It is said that during the winter season Siva used to come from the cold regions of the Himalayas, to follow

the course of the Ganges down to Benares, and again with the advance of the hot summer season, he would retrace his steps to his home in the Himalayas. He practiced Yoga and other secret occult disciplines and achieved enormous Siddhis (miraculous powers). However, he was a non-Aryan and thus was not given due respect with a place of honor among the Aryan dignitaries of his time.

There was a king of that period named Daksha who lived in his kingdom at Kankhal, near Hardwar. This is a place where the Ganges meets the plains. It is natural that the king of this area would have knowledge of a Yogi who had acquired such enormous powers and Daksha was the leader in the opposition of the Aryans who opposed recognition of Siva. His daughter Gauri, however, fell in love with Siva, and much against her father's wishes, married him. The enraged king then organized a large social festival with the plan to insult his son-in-law by inviting all except Siva. Gauri prevailed a long time on her husband before she was permitted to go.

Finally, with Siva's permission, she set out for her father's kingdom. On arrival at the palace she found that her beloved husband was given such public humiliation before all others that she committed suicide right there on the spot. When Siva was informed of these events, in wrath he came to the palace and ransacked the whole festival and eventually killed his father-in-law.

In a state of madness from the grief over the loss of his beloved wife, Gauri, he took her dead body away with him. He carried the body on his shoulder, roaming throughout India. Coming to know of this tragic affair, Vishnu, the God of Preservation, followed Siva as he roamed about and at fifty-two places he cut off a part of the dead body which was hanging from the shoulder of Siva until all the body had dropped.

Even today these fifty-two places are considered auspicious and holy by the Shakti cult and are places of worship for Tantriks. This story is no doubt a mixture of

allegory and history and the reader may take what he wants. In brief, God wished to distribute Shakti (Divine loving mother-power) all over India and the Static Power had to come into play in order to manifest.

It was the duty of Vishnu to attend to the distribution of this Divine body, which contained the fifty-two different aspects of Shakti, to fifty-two auspicious places in order to anchor power for the Divine Play. This story remains an important cornerstone for Tantriks even today.

The Tantra scriptures divide human beings into several classifications according to their state of aptitude and attainment in spiritual life, and the initiation given is according to each one's aptitude. By this classification, the lowest is considered to be at the animal level and the second is the human level.

The ideal and goal of all Tantrik practices is the same—namely, the unification of the finite soul with the Cosmic Soul. To achieve this end, one sect relies exclusively on love for the Divine mother, who is viewed as Cosmic dynamic energy. Since they view the Cosmos as Her revelation, there is nothing for them to give up. This is in contrast to the Buddhist view, as we have stated in the above, but the ultimate goal is the same. Tantriks say: "Let us enjoy the Mother's Cosmic Play. At the same time, since Her Play goes from gross to subtle, let us seek perpetually the subtle and let us use the gross as a stepping stone."

Another Tantrik sect gives attention more to the internal nerve-plexus known as Chakras. These subtle nerve centers and their part in the Cosmic Play will be described further in Chapter 9. Here we will say simply that these centers are located in the cerebrospinal axis. This school visualizes that evolution moves forward with the force of Cosmic Conscious Energy (Kundalini) which is coiled in an inert sleeping form in the Muladhara Chakra; it is located in the lowest place in the cerebrospinal axis.

When the finite soul starts its conscious journey to the

Infinite soul, this energy that has been so long inert in animal-man rises until it reaches its destination, at the top center, the Sahasrara. When this energy is lying inert in the Muladhara Chakra, it functions in an unconscious way through the animalistic nature of man, in the activities of eating, sleeping and procreation.

These Tantriks invoke the Shakti power of the Divine Mother through either some Yogic processes or some devotional prayers to awaken this dormant or inert state of Cosmic Energy, causing it to rise up through the higher Chakras in the cerebrospinal axis. In this way, the expansion of consciousness and the heightening of realization comes to bring an appreciation of higher intrinsic values. Through this process, the Jiva (the finite soul) comes finally to appreciate that in reality it is Siva, the Cosmic Static Energy. For so long, through Her playful mind, the Cosmic Mother as Shakti has made the soul a gross worldly player; Shakti (Kali, Durga, etc.) is propitiated with the view that She will release the finite soul from the worldly play and ultimately, through a gradual process, open the Chakras one-by-one until full realization comes.

The Kundalini (coiled-up Cosmic Energy) finally reaches the top of the brain where the center is called the Sahasrara. The Supreme consciousness comes when all duality goes. This, according to them, is Samadhi. The finite soul has become Siva, the Cosmic Soul in its original state. This is the goal of the sect.

There is still another branch of Tantriks who practice in a slightly different way. This group takes the help of Mantra to propitiate certain deities, thereby to gain Siddhis (occult powers) and ultimately to propitiate the Shakti in the form of either Durga or Kali, who is viewed as the totality of Cosmic Conscious Energy in dynamic form of Mother. All other Tantrik deities are simply aspects of certain qualities extracted from the Cosmic Energy in its dynamic form, to play their relative and respective roles according to the demand and necessity of the devotee concerned.

Through utterance of the Mantra, and through love and prayer to the deity of that Mantra—or sometimes even through the simple utterance of one word—there comes a final state of consummation. Thus, the devotee reaches a state of embrace in the arms of the Divine Mother; this is a state of Samadhi. We can find many vivid descriptions among saints from ancient times through today, of this kind of Samadhi, but the most vivid is to be found in the life of Sri Ramakrishna (See chapter 10).

As we have said, the sole aim in Tantra is to bring the finite soul to the Oneness of the Cosmic Soul. Viewing every facet of life as the One Cosmic Play, with no discrimination as to one thing being more valuable or desirable than another, many strange practices have evolved, which appear odd and even meaningless to the Westerner—as well as to many Indians who do not have the angle of vision to see the whole picture with its lofty aims. The author wants to caution his readers, who might come across such Tantrik practices that seem weird and meaningless, to withhold judgment until they can appreciate how such practices serve the goal by helping the aspirant to transcend duality, and through such transcendence to go on until a state of dispassionate equilibrium is realized.

The author has found no attraction for himself in these drastic techniques. There are many kinds of Tantra that have more beautiful disciplines. These are more pleasant and juicy and have taken him to the same goal, which is Sahaj Samadhi.

The ideal and principle of Tantra is great. This school, which has come through countless ages, has kept its dynamic quality and continues to add whatever new thought comes with each age. In short, Tantra properly understood goes to establish something like Laya Yoga. It is the gross finite ego that is dissolved and lost forever.

The aim of Tantra is the dissolution of the finite self by gradually expanding the physical consciousness to the

ultimate Cause of Cosmic Consciousness. It says that the Cosmic Conscious Energy is lying dormant in all forms from the mineral world to the animal-type man. This Cosmic Consciousness can be developed and expanded until supraconsciousness manifests as a Divine Ego.

What happens then, they do not say . . . yet. They leave that aspect to be realized by each individual aspirant for himself.

BHAKTI

Samadhi as conceived by the Vaisnabs (followers of Vishnu)

Truly speaking, Samadhi as such has little place in the scriptures of the Bhakti school. Sometimes, however, we do come across this word, as well as descriptions of states which can easily be included in our concept of Samadhi. However, the ideal of Samadhi and the experience of the Bhakta which come as moods in devotional love can go to the highest spiritual heights.

These come through one-pointed devotional attitudes rather than through the conscious control of the mind. Hence, they have often escaped the notice of those who look for the term Samadhi. It is better that we look in the Bhakti school for the term *Bhava* which in its highest achievement is the most subtle Samadhi man has yet experienced. In Chapter 10 you will find intimate descriptions of these moods.

The reader must have noticed by now that there are multifarious ways to still the mind to a state of collectedness in which there is an intense quiescence which is usually termed Samadhi. To deal with the Vaishnab point of view and the practices in their system that brings about this state would alone be an encyclopedia. Still, in our simple way, let us present the essence of their thought.

The Vaisnabs consider love for the Supreme Per-

son—the creator, destroyer and preserver all in One—as the supreme goal. Grace from the Divine Beloved is of course necessary for the realization of Divinity. This supreme Beloved Person is known in different forms with different names such as Vishnu, Krishna, Narayana or Rama, etc.

They envision the approach to the Divine Beloved to be in stages which are roughly called Sasti (first touch of Divinity), Samipya, (nearness), Salokya (in the same region), and Sajuya (closest touch). These are expressions showing ever more closeness to the Divine Beloved, much on the principle of the interior castles of St. Theresa of Avila.

But since this way of approach is from the earlier concepts and is perhaps an immature state of human conception or understanding, we will go on to the description of the stages of devotional love as expressed by Sri Chaitanya. He distinguished the different stages of man's personal relationship to a Divine Person in a finer way. He says that, first, man's aspiration to Divinity takes him to a calm mood called Bhava. Originally, this first stage of Bhava mood was known as Shanta and was practiced by the Rishis of ancient times.

This is a meditative state wherein the mind becomes calm and receptive to the notion of the sublimity and vastness of the Being who has created this Universe; this mood contains a state of awe and wonder and to an extent it includes an intellectual understanding, flavored with devotional love. It does not satisfy the devotee for long.

The next step found in human aspiration is devotion and love offered to Divinity through service. Hanuman, as depicted in the epic called *Ramayana* is a typical example of this mood. He rendered loving service to the Supreme Being Incarnate, in the form of Rama, as the Divine Person. It will be curious to note that when this state of love and service is matured

there comes ultimately a stage where it presents a further depth of knowledge and wisdom, whereby the finite being (Hanuman) can realize that he is part and parcel of the Cosmic Being. He comes to know that he originated from his Beloved Lord Rama.

This approach is from the dualistic to nondualistic. What the advocates of this school want us to know is that even in this mood, which renders devotional service as the sole tool, the highest realization from the Jhani point of view can also be realized.

But has Samadhi any place in this drama? Certainly it has. In the intense devotional mood, Hanuman forgets himself as a servant. The first step is to collect all the mental modifications whereby this love becomes one-pointed to his Lord. This mood in itself reflects some aspects of Samadhi which we have already noted in the Patanjal Yoga system. This state is called Bhava Samadhi or a state of collectiveness achieved through the play of devotional love with its play of emotions. This also seems to be an immature state in human achievement.

Bhava Samadhi soon leads to the next stage. When the barrier of emotions is crossed there is a new flavor of intellect which is another kind of Samadhi. In this state of achievement there are flashes of higher knowledge; this is described as Prajna Ghana, meaning condensed wisdom of the realization of God. Thus, when the emotional factor of devotion is mixed with wisdom, there is a higher kind of Samadhi. We may term it Bhava Ghana Samadhi.

Sri Chaitanya described the various kinds of relationships that can be developed between the finite soul and the Infinite. Undoubtedly, these moods are mostly emotional and take their shape from the love relationships man finds in his daily life. The relationship between the finite soul and the Infinite Soul can be developed as son to father, mother to son, friend to friend, etc. In all of these relationships with Divinity

the human soul finds it difficult to forget his own personality and often aspires to more than he can comprehend or believe.

We find such an instance when we look to Yashoda who loved the Incarnate Sri Krishna as her own child. It was difficult for her to believe that her own son was the Supreme Being in the form of this little child. Even when miraculous feats were accomplished by her mysterious child, the flashes that came to reveal that He was really the Incarnation soon bubbled down again.

For example, once mother Yashoda opened the mouth of little Krishna, who had mischievously put some earth there. In His mouth she saw the whole Cosmic Play in miniature. Although in this way she suddenly got the flash of the Cosmic Show in its magnificence and the realization that her child was God Incarnate, soon her human filial love for her little child diluted the idea.

We have told of another instance in the scriptures when Arjuna insisted that Sri Krishna show the Cosmic revelation of Himself as the Incarnate. But when Arjuna was given this sight, he called out in pain for Sri Krishna to withdraw this Cosmic Revelation, which he was not yet prepared to receive.

All of this goes to show that the collectedness of mind that comes through emotions, although it may bring a state of Samadhi or Bhava as it is called in Bhakti terminology, is an unreliable mood. Like 7-Up soda-pop it bubbles up and bubbles down as quickly. Emotional-devotional love by itself not only gives a difficult footing to stand on, but sometimes in its extremity brings madness. But when this emotional love is matured into a devotional love that is mixed with wisdom, the life-force of the devotee transforms or divinizes the cells of the body until the revelation or realization of the Divine Person finds a firm footing.

Love and wisdom combine together to make a properly matured and suitable vehicle to hold the inrush of Divine Energy which comes in a Samadhi achieved at this stage of mature devotion. When the ground for such Samadhi is carefully prepared, the road ahead to the highest goals is a road of bliss and joy with the beautiful flavor of love. But for the devotee who tries to stand on emotions alone, there is much danger. There are many illustrations in history describing the madness that comes to such devotees who try to climb on their emotions when not supported with wisdom.

Sri Chaitanya also classified devotional love into several stages. The first stage is called Gopi-Bhava. In this stage, taking the clue from the Gopis who played with Sri Krishna in His youth, love is given to Divinity as a Person but there is the expectation that He will love in return. In the next stage, Radha-Bhava, there is still some expectation but it is in a more subtle form. At this stage, the devotee loves because there is joy in loving. In other words, this love is still a personally motivated love. The next stage is still higher. This love is with no expectation and is given because it is the nature of the human being to love. This mood is called Maha-Bhava.

In each of these stages of Bhava there is a collectedness of mind. There comes a pause, a stillness of mind much like that achieved through the Yoga practices of the Raja Yogi and the Jnana Yogi and the meditation disciplines of the Buddhists, wherein all the organs and the vital and mental forces stop their function. These moods come for the Bhakta with devotional practices and chanting God's name wherein the mind becomes one-pointed in the absorption of love for the Divine Form.

The signs of this mood are seen in the physical body. The hairs of the body may stand on end; the body may shiver or shake; tears may come from a smiling

face. Sweat in excess sometimes is there. These all show there is an imbalance in the nervous system of the body caused from the strain of the inrush of Divine Energy. When the stage of Maha Bhava is reached, the physical system settles down to a calmness with the tranquillity of mind and love combined. Even these high moods soon die down.

Then comes a mature state called Sahaj-Samadhi. In this state of Samadhi, the mind and body are so tuned and matured that the normal physical work can be carried out almost mechanically, while the soul plays constantly with His Divine Beloved. This state goes on until involvement in the physical world in the old way is no longer possible. Looking to the bird sitting on her nest we can get a clue. While hatching her eggs safely hidden under her belly, she is looking outward with a vacant eye to the external world. Her whole mind is really collected and focussed on her eggs tucked underneath her.

So a person attaining Sahaj Samadhi may do some worldly activities, but with a vacant look. Because his engrossment is in thoughtful devotional love to his Beloved who dwells within his heart, more and more he forgets his worldly life.

These moods of devotional love are practiced by the followers of Vishnu and Krishna. They were proclaimed, clarified and further perfected by Sri Chaitanya about 400 years ago as the ultimate goal for the devotional aspirant to achieve. There are millions of devotees today who are practicing these moods in one form or another.

Sri Ramakrishna, the latest Incarnation, has given beautiful and novel expressions to clarify these practices and to show higher moods of love in a new context. The first stage he called Kama Radha. In this stage the devotee mixes his love with desire. However, he does de-

velop both a gross and subtle relationship with the Divine Being as the Beloved Incarnate.

As there is some expectation, either gross or subtle, the Samadhi or collected mind that is achieved in this mood comes and goes; it does not take a dependable shape. When, however, this mood goes higher and deeper and the cells begin to be Divinized, a stage is reached that is called Prema Radha. This mood has, in the main, the same qualities as that denoted in Radha Ehava by Sri Chaitanya. In this stage the devotee plays with his Infinite Beloved, while dispatching his worldly duties. Gradually this mood matures into the higher Maha Bhava described above.

When Sri Chaitanya, the Incarnate, came again in the form of Sri Ramakrishna, He did not stop here; He pointed to a new state to be achieved, which he called Nitya Radha. In this mood the human mind finally goes beyond the necessity of all the Samadhis as commonly understood up to this time. The mind has come to a region where the Divinized soul plays eternally as the Cosmic Player.

In this stage, which has already been shown in the life of Sri Ramakrishna, there is no necessity for practicing Yoga in any form which we have known up to this time. Both meditation and devotional practices will have served their purpose.

When this state is reached by humanity, not only the composition of the body cells will be different, but even the so-called animal and plant life will have more subtle forms given to them by nature. It will be the Divinized human being who, through the achievements gained in spiritual practices, will force nature to provide a suitable environment for Divine Life. Every expression of life will take a new shape for the new Cosmic Play.

CHRISTIANITY

The *Bible* is in essence a story of man: his past, his present and his future. From the *Old Testament* we have the opportunity of knowing most of the past aspects of the human being and the evolution of the Cosmos through nature. But here and there are pearls to show what is ahead in the treasure of the *New Testament*, the story and message of Jesus Christ. Even in the *Old Testament*, in Psalm 46:10 we find, "Be still and know that I am God."

In this cryptic utterance there is an encyclopedia of thought and spiritual practice in condensed form. Here is really a call to man to realize that to acquire a knowledge either mundane or spiritual, one should make the mind still. This seems to echo the Patanjal Yoga system, which described Yoga as stilling the mind by restraining the mental modifications.

In the *Old Testament* there is no detailed philosophical scientific development of the profound truth in this message, "Be still and know that I am God." This might have been because the understanding and realization of the people of those ancient times were not able to grasp such profound concepts. But, in fact, this state of stillness is a state of Samadhi when we interpret it to mean stilling the mind.

It is not until we go to the *New Testament* and the life of Christ that we find this concept developed more clearly. There is a hint in some of His utterances—and in some of the powers that He showed—that He was cognizant of the values and principles of Raja Yoga and knew how Pranic activity could be controlled. For example, He tells His followers they must die to live and says "You must be born again."*

*John 3:7.

Now, we can ask in reference to the first quotation, "Who will die?" Certainly the soul will not die. If the body dies, naturally the soul is expected to continue to survive either in so-called heaven or in so-called hell or maybe in a mixed place. Be whatever it may, to ask a man to die physically so that he can live by survival of his soul is a tautology or mere repetition of words without significance.

What Christ really meant is the transcending of one state of existence to another. This transcendence can be either from the Annamayakosha to the Pranamayakosha or from the Pranamayakosha to the Manomayakosha and so on. In short, it means to leave your former state of realization and attainment by thrusting out of your existing state to move into a higher state through Yoga. This is what Christ meant to tell us by die to live.

We have no record of where and how Christ spent his youth. This mysterious silence is somewhat penetrated when we examine what He taught and what He did when He came back to the Holy Land to teach. Perhaps He was in seclusion all that time practicing Yoga.

When He appeared before mankind to give them His special message, we find many Yogic practices evidenced; whenever He was to make a decision, he went into seclusion for prayer and this was a state of Samadhi wherein He found God's guidance. It was through this state that events to come were revealed to Him.

He also commanded His followers to go within their closets and pray secretly.* And many a time He expressed sorrow that He could not tell His followers more. He had to teach through parables and miracles.

Undoubtedly Christ was the greatest Yogi in the history of man. A minute examination of His life shows that He had mastered almost all the hierarchy of Yogas. Only if this were true could He have attained

*Matthew 6:6.

a Divinized body and retained it to reveal this glorious truth, the reality of the Bhagabati Tanu* to humanity. This is the significance of the resurrection which has long been hidden from man. When Christ, the Incarnation, came again as Sri Ramakrishna, He developed further the value and significance of the resurrected Divinized body which man is to achieve. We have discussed this in the last two chapters of this book.

ISLAM

The Muslim religion was originated in Arabia by the Prophet Mohammed. He proclaimed God as One: Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. Before giving out his new religion, he had been on extensive tours in the Middle East and had contacted many foreigners who came to Arabia with their caravans.

He enriched his thought with the conceptions of Christianity that came his way, at least as far as monotheism is concerned; his first revolt was against the polytheistic nature of worship that was prevailing at that time in Arabia, and his religion did not fall in line with Christian thought very much, although he based some of his precepts and observations on the Old Testament.

The original religion as it emanated from the Prophet was based mainly on devotional prayer for guidance from God. Whenever the Prophet needed to make any judgment on crucial points, he resorted to prayer in some secluded place and then put himself in a meditative mood. With this method his judgments and decisions came as inspired revelations from a spiritual source. Although his religion did not lay much emphasis on philosophy and logic as such; nevertheless,

*See *Be Your Own Guru* by this author.

its effort to forge a common brotherhood of religion is undoubtedly a valuable contribution to human thought.

The Holy Koran is based on the revealed and inspired thoughts of the Prophet, given to him in an inspired meditative mood; thus, they cannot be questioned by any of his followers. There is, therefore, little scope to put them into a critical study. So far as we have been able to discover, he made little reference to either the science of prayer or Mantram; although he himself was great, and must have had experiences which were Samadhi, these cannot be scanned for want of proper information.

The Sufi cult is an offshoot of the Islamic religion. The Sufi school of thought has been to some extent influenced by the Advaita Vedantist thought in India, but to a greater degree by the Bauls. Although this Baul school which is sometimes called Sahajiya is quite different, there are striking similarities. Considerable light in this connection is gained when a study is made of *DISCOURSES ON RUMI* by A. J. Arberry published by John Murray of London.

This school of thought is an approach to God as Person through loving devotion. Although neither Prophet Mohammed nor his followers formally consider God as a Person, still we note here and there are hints that although professing otherwise, they speak to God and they pray to God. Since the nature of the human mind is as it is, this is only natural. In other words, until the mind is dissolved into the Infinite it has—under compulsion of its own nature—to speak and think in words; and this thinking and speaking in religion is done as if to some Divine Person, whether this is recognized or not.

Therefore, this tendency of the Sufi sect to speak to God as a person—although strictly speaking outside the Islamic faith—is not unnatural to human nature.

The ideal to be achieved in the Sufi sect is to attain what is termed in Hindu scripture as Sahaj Samadhi

(awareness simultaneously of Divinity and world). They dance and sing in praise of God and attain a state of Bhava Samadhi (emotional love mood). When this mood is matured further, then Sahaj Samadhi comes.

SIKHISM

About 500 years ago there sprang up in India a new faith coming from the inspiration of Sri Guru Nanakji. At that period, there was a great deal of persecution of the Hindus by the Moghul Kings, who were Muslims. Consequently, much hatred and violence sprang up in the name of these two religions.

Guru Nanakji practiced not only the values but the rituals of both religions, and his followers at the time of his death did not know to which he belonged. The Hindus wanted to claim his body for their death ceremonies and the Muslims also laid the same claim; it is said that his body disappeared mysteriously before his followers could settle their dispute.

To all who loved him, this was the sign they needed to see that God is One and can be approached with equal success through either the Hindu or the Muslim path. However, in time, new practices sprang up which answered the need of those who were inspired to follow his Ideal. His contribution to the spiritual world of today is great.

Guru Nanakji believed in theism and introduced love, devotional prayer and song for the glory of the Supreme Divine Being. The scriptures as compiled by the Sikhs from the writings of their ten Gurus is a book, in the main, of devotional songs to God and the instructions as to what qualities are needed for achieving a loving relationship with Divinity. Emphasis is put on the value of work as the duty of all those who seek Divine favor.

A special feature in the spiritual practice that he recommends is constant chanting of God's name. This is

a Mantra relating to the Supreme Beloved. The most common picture we see of Guru Nanakji is of him in meditative mood while telling the beads of his rosary. His eyes are half-closed and the serenity on his face shows that he is enjoying Sahaj Ṡamadhi, if not a higher state.

This state of Samadhi, as we all know, is described in the Hindu scriptures as Shambhabi Mudra; the mind is easily and naturally divided into two states. One remains in union with God; the other is watching the world dispassionately. In this state sometimes the play is between the Anahata and the Vishuddha. When the balance is towards the Anahata center, the Samadhi state leads toward loving of God through praise of His Name and singing to His glory. And when the scale weighs in favor of the Vishudha, the outer expression becomes more mute and the whole being remains more absorbed in outward manifestation.

The Sikhs in these days put most emphasis on the chanting of God's name and service to God through human beings. In other words, they are in the main a mixture of Karma Yoga and devotional love to God with less attention in their scriptures to the psychological and philosophical aspects of religion.

SRI AUROBINDO'S PHILOSOPHY

Here and there throughout our book we have paid our respects to Sri Aurobindo. His contribution to the world of thought and religion is superb. He has impressed us with the masterly way he has aptly marshalled all the cream of the philosophies and religious thoughts that humanity has so far attained, and has rechannelled them to show how the movement in evolution is going in a new direction to a new phase in human history.

He tells us that for so long the Cosmic evolution was proceeding unconsciously through the laws of nature; the outcome of this evolution is the emergence

of consciousness. He asserts that now it is the duty of the human being to consciously chariot this Cosmic evolution into some higher region which is beyond the range of the so-called *blind nature*. In short, man is today being made aware by some unseen force that he has a special obligation and duty to revitalize and develop his spiritual nature, so that he can gain individual freedom and enjoy the unmixed happiness that is his due. This supraman will then reshape the Cosmic evolution to move into a nobler and higher goal, which has been unconceived for so long by human beings.

Human intelligence is now beginning to go through these new phases, starting with the present intellectual attainment and developing a higher and higher state of mind. The intellectual leads to the illumined, and the illumined leads to an intuitive mind. This intuitive mind is a stepping stone to what Sri Aurobindo called the supra-mind or the supra-mental stage of human evolution. This is the highest stage for the human being to attain, and there the Divine force can play at its best.

With the limited intellectual power of the human being, it is impossible to understand or really evaluate just what this supra-mental force is and what the supra-mental state is. The most that can be said is that it is a state of utopia in reality.

It is not possible, either, to say just what a supra-mental being is. But to reach this state, Sri Aurobindo indicates that the human being will have to acquire the fruits of the Yoga systems of the past, and something then must be added through a Yogic process called Integral Yoga; in this he claims that different powers of the mind, i.e., thinking, feeling and willing, should have equal play in spiritual practices.

These values then should be forged into one force operating through moral and spiritual values. In this state all the intrinsic values of truth, beauty and goodness will be in a complete harmonious fusion out of which will come new moral and spiritual values.

The fusion of all these things will produce the emergence of the supra-mental being. To achieve this state the human being must do his utmost to ascend toward such a Divine State and at the same time should invoke the Divine Source from above to descend into his being to make the transformation complete.

When this transformation is accomplished, nature will evolve a new quality out of the earth itself that will be fit to hold the Divine Life achieved by the human beings. This is, in brief, the Divine Life on earth that Sri Aurobindo aspired after which can be realized through Integral Yoga.

Needless to say, it has a tremendous mark of originality and glory in itself. The validity is enhanced when it is observed that most of his ideas find root in the existing Hindu scriptures. Sri Aurobindo himself states that in Vaisnab philosophy there is to be found the concept of Bhagabati Tanu (divinized physical body), and in another scripture we find the concept of Dibya Tanu (glorified spiritual body).

His concept includes this ideal but there is something more that he has added. He emphasizes that the next step in evolution is for the supra-mental man, or the Divinized man to develop a new way of life right here on our planet; his destiny is not to escape this life and find some abode away from the earth and sit idle to enjoy Divine bliss. He says that the Divinized man will find joy and fulfillment in action here on earth.

Be that as it may, we do find in the life of two Incarnations* a definite clue to the Bhagabati Tanu (Divinized body). Their respective lives show the revelation and application of Bhagabati Tanu as the example of Divine Life that man is already achieving. We should look to the Incarnations to see the ideals and the patterns for the future.

*Christ and Sri Ramakrishna

Here we will take the space to recite only one story told about Sri Ramakrishna that supports this truth. We hear from one of his disciples that one day when he was walking closely behind Sri Ramakrishna he suddenly saw that the physical body of Sri Ramakrishna which was in a walking motion, had appeared before him like a glowing, ethereal mist. What the devotee saw reminded him of what is said about angels or God when they make their appearance to a human being. The devotee at once exclaimed to Sri Ramakrishna: "Listen, Oh Ramakrishna! You are not a human being. Your body shows that you are eternal and heavenly."

Also, in the life of Jesus Christ—2000 years ago—we find that His resurrected body points the way to the conception that Sri Aurobindo has given us of Divinized man. We all know that the physical body of Christ disappeared from the cave, and that he reappeared again and again after His resurrection in a physical body that His disciples could recognize. This body was both heavenly—because it descended from heaven—and earthly, because it still showed qualities of a mortal body. Did He not eat with His disciples and did He not allow Thomas to touch His body, to verify that it was physical in nature?

Here and there in the lives of saints and sages in all ages—ancient and modern—we have heard of qualities that are of a Divine and subtle nature beyond those so far achieved by the average human being. These instances, as well as the events in the lives of the Incarnations that we have related in the above, take us beyond a shadow of a doubt to know that Divine Life is already in a working process in human man. Sri Aurobindo's projection, although not entirely a new concept, takes on new value when viewed in the light of the scriptures and the history of their fulfillment.

There is one pertinent question precipitated by Sri Aurobindo's philosophy that cries for an answer. It is projected that both the planet and the human being will

reach a Divinized state where there is only Divine Life and everything together will take shape and bloom according to Sri Aurobindo's forecast. What will be the fate then of this earth and other terrestial places or planets when Divine Life is firmly established? Will there be a halt in evolution or will everything be started over again *de novo*? We can hardly find any place in the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo where he gave light on this matter.

Again, we go to the utterings of Sri Ramakrishna to find that He declared that a new state must always come. No matter how high man goes to achieve higher and higher spiritual values, there will never be a halt or a *fait accompli* of a super-heavenly state, or a place where there will be nothing higher because there is no end to God-realization. There is no end to God's play of Nitya Radha (eternal play of love).

MODERN TENDENCIES

There have been some tendencies by modern psychoanalysts and parapsychologists to explain spiritual practices through machines or through psychoanalysis. The author has consulted scholars and has read many journals and books which have endeavored to explain and substantiate the so-called scientific inquiry being made into the workings of the mind. This approach seems to start with so-called psychoanalysis and then, without any bridge, it seems to suddenly leap into the spiritual domain, to explain what is going on there.

There is no doubt that some psychoanalysts, or even some of the machines invented to probe into the mind activity, can give details on the play of the mind; such machines can differentiate between the rate of action of the several brain waves which run parallel to psychological movements.

The psychoanalyst very seldom concerns himself

with any higher values, contenting himself to delve into the personality balance of his patient. Except for a very few like Dr. Ira Progoff, who stresses the need for man to achieve higher values, all of the other approaches proclaim that their goal is to help humanity either to adjust happily to his world, or to escape in other dimensions of the mind to other worlds.

They seem to expect to find an instant heaven for their followers. All of these approaches ignore the pious aspiration of a sincere soul, and since evolution is striving to achieve higher goals of intrinsic values, their efforts have little to contribute and in fact are bound to be not very productive.

Has the psychoanalyst—or any machine—anything to say about achieving higher values? By what process and through what machine can a man understand and achieve any of the intrinsic values? Can a machine measure the appreciative mental part of a man, so far as music is concerned? Can a machine or a psychoanalyst make a nonmusical person musical? Can they transform a nonintellectual person to an intellectual? If they cannot promise these changes, how can they venture to delve into a region where the three intrinsic values are to converge in higher spiritual and moral values?

That part of man which acquires wisdom and appreciates intrinsic values as a whole cannot be measured or dealt with by machines or other mechanical means; neither can machines explain man's urge to acquire these intrinsic values. Man in his present evolution has already transcended the benefits that could have come out of these latest efforts of psychoanalysis. Hence we do not feel tempted to discuss Samadhi so far as this modern school and the potential it offers is concerned.

CHAPTER 8

A NEW LOOK AT SAMADHI

It might not have escaped the attention of the reader that in the discussion in the previous chapter on the history and development of Samadhi, most schools of thought have emphasized only two aspects of the human mind—namely, thinking and willing. All through the ages the various schools have tried to engage only these two aspects both in theory and in practice.

At the outset we must say that since Samadhi is the outcome of an effort made consciously and voluntarily, the volitional or will factor of the human mind undoubtedly plays the dominant role. Most of the ancient schools of thought, in giving emphasis to this point, ignore the feeling or emotional side of the mind, and many also give less importance to the cognition or thinking factor.

For example, the Hatha Yogi lays emphasis on the will or volitional factor of the mind. The thinking factor is practically ignored, and feeling or emotion has no place in the practice of pure Hatha Yoga. We have repeatedly emphasized that an integrated scientific Yoga for the aspirant of this era should develop

and bring under control all three aspects of the mind: thinking, feeling, and willing.

Therefore, except in special cases, it is our view that the practices of Hatha Yoga should be kept to a minimum with the aim of keeping the body fit for more subtle practices which develop the thinking and feeling aspects. This has been explained in detail in our previous book, *Scientific Yoga for the Man of Today*.

To summarize, at first we find in the beginning when man begins to aspire after something higher, the contribution of Hatha Yoga is much. Hatha means *force* and in this system the goal is to be achieved by force. Practices in Hatha Yoga can induce a state of equilibrium between the Annamayakosha and the Pranamayakosha. This state is usually called Jada Samadhi. It can be described as a state of inertia, a static or stupefied state. In this state of Samadhi the physical, the neurological and to an extent the vital functions are stilled until they are inert.

That Jada Samadhi is the first springboard there is no doubt. When this kind of Samadhi is achieved through voluntary practices, it gives rise also to the development of some occult powers. The author has witnessed many Hatha Yogis perform miraculous acts such as drinking poison, swallowing nails and broken glass or remaining buried alive for some hours or weeks without harm to the physical body; but these feats are not the goal and a clever person will transcend these experiences to practice Raja Yoga.

In fact, since Jada Samadhi is a Samadhi acting only on the Annamayakosha (physical plane) and Pranamayakosha (vital plane) it does not effect the mental plane and this should not be considered as a spiritual experience at all. Spiritual life as such begins on the mental plane.

Pure Raja Yoga deals especially with Prana or the vital aspect of the body. This practice aims at controlling the subtle nerve currents. They claim that in con-

trolling the individual pranas they can gradually extend that control over the Cosmic Prana (for relationship of Prana, The Prana and pranas see Chapter 5). Through Raja Yoga practices the Raja Yogi extends his domain and power not only over the functions of his own human body but over other Cosmic forces, including the mental regions of others. This may seem to be a lofty claim but since individual prana is linked with the Cosmic Prana, a Raja Yogi can, no doubt, traverse beyond his individual body and even exercise some control over the Cosmos that is external to his own body and mind.

Since mind and the vital forces are essentially interlinked to the mental and vital forces throughout the Cosmos, a Raja Yogi can certainly achieve control over his own mind to an extent and also to a limited extent over the mind of others. The Raja Yogi naturally has to take the help of his own mind to get control over his prana; but in this Yoga the volitional or will factor is predominant with the thinking quality of the mind lending only a helping hand. Mind *development*, as such, is not a part of Raja Yoga.

The Patanjal Yoga system of practice when separated from the Samkhya school of thought is the best example of Raja Yoga. The Patanjal Yoga system develops and uses the power of the mind no doubt to control Cosmic energy to achieve certain set goals harnessing the basic forces. But singularly missing is the inquiry into the reality of the Atman (individual soul) except when Patanjal philosophy is merged with Samkhya. As with the Hatha Yogi, the Raja Yogi develops many occult powers. The contribution that pure Raja Yoga can make to higher spiritual life is not very much.

Their practices involve the volitional and only to a limited extent, the thinking aspects of the mind, and these do not contribute much to an ideal integrated scientific Yoga system which includes the development

of the mind and the emotions needed for the man of this era.

When mind is made to deal mostly with the cognition aspect of its being, we come to the field of Jnana Yoga. In this classification the Samkhya system is the earliest. Buddhist (Theraveda, Tibetan and Zen especially) all fall into this category. Each of these schools deals principally with the thinking factor of the mind. These schools also take the help to an extent of the volitional aspect of the mind, but the emotional factor is singularly missing in Jnana Yoga as it is in Hatha and Raja Yoga. In fact, the Jnana Yogi warns us that if we give any quarter to the emotional aspect we shall fall short of our mark.

The systems of Yoga which deal principally with the cognition or thinking factor try to perceive the quality of the mind, to realize the nature of the finite self and its relationship to the Supreme Being, either in form or as formless. In fact, the emphasis is really on the latter and the Buddhist school goes so far as to say that there is no one creator—only the quality of being which pervades all sentient beings.

But why the feeling factor should be blotted out from the practice of Yoga is not clear even from their own logic. The logic is this. As we have many times repeated, if the human mind consists of thinking, feeling, and willing, the approach to Divinity in whatever form should be fashioned to include all these factors; which factors are to predominate and which practices ought to be adopted should be according to the individual temperament and constitution. One factor may be most important in one individual but the other two factors should never be altogether blotted out if the individual is to realize the fullness of his spiritual life and the highest ideal of this age.

Most Bhakti Yoga schools have committed a similar error. The Chaitanya school as well as the Orthodox Vaisnavites say that as we cannot know all

facts of the Infinity we should simply love Him. Love alone is enough for the human being to aspire after and enjoy; nothing else is necessary; but, as we have pointed out in the previous chapter, time has shown us that such imbalance not only fails to give a permanent balanced mood of love, but often even produces madness.

Sri Ramakrishna tells that if we love any person, deity or the Lord Himself deeply for love's sake only with no personal motive, that person, deity or God will one day reveal all his properties to us without our asking. The highest devotional love to God, being pure and simple, is love only for love's sake. In such case one day God will reveal to such a lover all of His Divine Attributes. Through pure devotional love all Cosmic knowledge and wisdom will be revealed by God's grace. This is the ideal and goal of the schools which adhere to devotional love for God alone.

These schools, as we have intimated, do not give the least quarter to the Yogas of volitional or thinking types.

Sri Aurobindo recognized this deficiency and developed Integral Yoga to harmonize the three factors. In Integral Yoga, all the three facets of the mind are fused together in aspiration to God and are integrated in a harmonious blend to converge for a higher spiritual flight. Although, on the whole, he seems to have put more emphasis on the thinking factor, there are flashes here and there of the devotional aspect to be noted. He has interpreted his Yogic system as an endeavor to harmonize the conflict between the three systems, Raja, Jnana and Bhakti and has given these three systems in a new dressing with the new flavor in his Integral Yoga.

The human goal, is, according to him, to achieve a supra-mental consciousness where God will descend and man will ascend to a halfway meeting-place in the supra-mental sphere. In this experience or meeting the

human soul will merge with Divinity and the cells will become Divinized. Man then with a Divinized Body will live in a glorified state similar to that conceived by Plato. Heaven will come down into earth and earth will be transformed to heaven to make a heavenly-earth or an earthly-heaven.

But is this the final destiny of the Universe and the Cosmic play? Why should man be prejudiced to think that God's creation ends with his perfection? Why does he feel that when he acquires a Divinized Body he will still be a man even though perfect and that such a perfect man is the final fruition of the Cosmic creative play?

Who knows? Perhaps the Cosmic Play in the Universe has already reached more subtle stages on other planets. There may be a new species already fashioned out of the Cosmos and in turn this species may express still higher achievement in the evolutionary process. Surely, God can find infinitely more joy in His play and infinite new forms in which to love Himself.

In short, the contribution of Sri Aurobindo spins out a new horizon where human beings will be each in *Prema Radha*. Prema Radha as we have discussed before is love for love's sake. (Also see Chapter 12.)

Until Sri Ramakrishna, the highest projection man had envisioned for himself was a perfected individual living in an earthly-heaven or a heavenly-earth; but Sri Ramakrishna hinted at a stage beyond which he called *Nitya Radha* (eternal love).

Since it is this author's conviction that Samadhi is the tool and the key to the achievement of higher values, we feel constrained at this point to clarify the grades of Samadhi. Our clarification will follow a new pattern based on the evolution and the development of the qualities in man needed for an ever higher flight into Infinity.

The hierarchy of Samadhi can be classified many ways. It can be considered according to the object

used for meditation in its gradations from gross to subtle (as charted out by the Samkhya system and the Buddhists); it can be classified according to Koshas or according to the moods in devotional love or according to the goal to realize God as Unmanifest, or to experience God in Form. Also, as we will discuss further in the last chapter, Samadhi can be viewed from the finite point of view or from the infinite point of view. Since there are so many ways of viewing Samadhi, it is difficult to evaluate Samadhi as a whole and still be fair to the views of each of the schools of thought.

According to the experience of the author, the graduating scale of Samadhi is best made when it is viewed from the principle of gross to subtle values, which we find inherent in the process of evolution. Samadhi, viewed from this angle, can be shown on a graduating scale with seven grades.

For example, we would start with Hatha Yoga which deals mostly with Annamayakosha or physical body. Next is Raja Yoga, which in its unmixed state, deals mostly with the Pranamayakosha or vital forces. The Jnana practices are third and they mostly involve the Manomayakosha. The Jnana can again be divided into two groups. One group will follow the Samkhya system; they put emphasis on following the gross element to the more subtle objects to arrive at higher and higher truths. The second group will follow the practices for meditation set out in the *Kathopanisad.* The Bhaktas come next. This is the fourth state. Their ideal is to converge to some form of Divinity through devotional love or through association. In the first stages of Bhakti, this devotion is up and down since it is mostly feeling without the influence of the mental quality. In its highest form the meditation is on the latest Incarnation.

The fifth stage has as its basis the previous gains which are often carried over from the efforts made in previous lives. Only the subtle values from those

achievements are left imprinted on the soul; the achievement should be directed into the latest message given to humanity for which the latest Incarnation descended. In the sixth stage the meditation is directed towards being a playmate to Divinity. This mood takes two forms, as child to mother or as lover to lover.

The seventh and highest stage as shown by Sri Ramakrishna has not yet been realized either in concept or in achievement by any existing school of thought. This latest and highest stage comes when both knowledge and love are matured. When love for God contains the value in the love of a son or daughter to mother and of lover to lover, both these values merge into one mood which is best described as love in love. This is the love that becomes Nitya-Lila Samadhi.

It is this state that the man of today is to achieve. This is the Samadhi that caused Sri Ramakrishna to dance in joy; this is the pure state of love that man is to become.

For both clarifying and evaluating the multiple kinds of Samadhi in a manner which will cross the barriers of thought of the various schools, and to give a new set of values that can serve every aspiring soul, the author offers the following terms to fit the above classifications of achievement:

Grades	*Samadhi to be achieved*	*Yoga for achieving*
1st	Jada Samadhi	Hatha Yoga
2nd	Pranic Samadhi	Raja Yoga
3rd	Manomaya Samadhi	Jnana Yoga
4th	Bhava Samadhi	Bhakti Yoga
5th	Vijnana Samadhi	Combination and-or achievement of the 4 above Yogas
6th	Lila Samadhi	Integral Yoga or Scientific Yoga for the Man of Today.

7th	Nitya Lila Samadhi	A unique and individual Yoga is to be developed by each according to his own aspirations, coming forth from the consummation of all the other Samadhis as stated above.

Evolution is the conscious emergence of higher dimensions and evolution is achieved through Samadhi.

There are two forces in our universe: one works in involution, and the other in evolution, or we can say that one works as a centrifugal force and one as a centripetal force. These forces work out in Nature's own way in all levels of consciousness starting at so-called gross matter and producing more and more subtle aspects, until there is an emergence of moral and intrinsic values.

When these forces which have been working in their own way through Nature's whims are consciously harnessed on the mental plane to bring a balanced state on the physical plane, the working of the Cosmic evolution comes as a balance and we have a state which we call a spiritual Samadhi.

Hatha Yoga

In Hatha Yoga, a Samadhi can be achieved, but this balanced state is on the physical plane only; Samadhi here is called Jada Samadhi–and for want of a better term, we have, in the classification set out above, kept this expression for this lowest stage. Jada means *inert*. Jada Samadhi is a state of equilibrium wherein the two Cosmic forces on the physical level are brought to a standstill and the body becomes inert.

This state is, of course, achieved through conscious disciplines. This is the first experience of consciously

tuning with the Cosmic Pause wherein there comes something new. There is a conscious awareness of a new and higher power and a new consciousness merges. It is as if—as Sri Aurobindo would say—blind matter has evolved for the first time to a higher region. The aspirant makes the discovery that there is a new vista, a new horizon to explore.

When the Hatha Yogi gains control over his physical form, there often comes some occult powers. Occult powers are nothing but the application of subtle force to a grosser plane; the moment a Yogi becomes aware that he can apply force in this manner to perform miraculous feats on some lower physical plane, he is tempted—so to say—to show his wares. Those who are not aware of the scientific basis of this power are often greatly enamored with these miracles. The Hatha Yogi has, in the main, achieved the power to perform miracles only so far as control over his own body is concerned and his powers on higher levels are not many.

Raja .Yoga

The next grade of Samadhi we shall call Pranic Samadhi. One thing should be noted. Whenever a higher grade of Samadhi comes, this achievement is inclusive of the achievements made on the lower levels.

Thus, in Pranic Samadhi, the pause that comes involves both the physical and the pranic nature. The something new that is achieved is a conscious control over both the physical and the vital functions of the body. For example, at any given moment such a Yogi can withdraw his mind or prana from his bodily sensory functions and at will can bring them to a balance of the centrifugal and the centripetal forces.

This brings the evolution and the involution in his body to a standstill and this pause or Samadhi we shall term Pranic Samadhi.

Under this classification, Nirvikalpa Samadhi is perhaps the highest to be achieved, but there are gradations of Nirvikalpa Samadhi. When Nirvikalpa Samadhi is achieved through pure Raja Yoga practices, it brings a cessation of body functions but only affects the physical and pranic or vital activities of the body.

Unmana Samadhi is also in this class. To achieve this Samadhi the Raja Yogi has taken note of the principle that so long as the breathing system works, the mind oscillates and there are mental modifications; stopping the breath stops the mind. The breathing system is only an outer expression of prana.

When this prana is working through the nervous system, it does so through the nerves and muscles. We inhale, pause, exhale, pause. The Raja Yogi would say that if the outer fly wheel of the machine is stopped, the inner one will also stop. Thus, if the breathing is stopped by some Yogic process, the energy in the physical, vital and mental spheres will also stop. This is accomplished by gradually calming down the inhalation and the exhalation through taking deep breaths on both the intake and the outake. When there is enough oxygen, the breathing stops as there is no more carbon dioxide or other gases to cause the lungs to function.

It is on this principle that a drowning person is given a forced inhalation of carbon dioxide to make the respiration system work again; however that may be, when the breathing is stopped, in this pause the physical and vital functions are brought to a halt and the mind is stilled. Unmana Samadhi is this experience.

We should note here that although the mind is stilled, it has automatically come to this state through the cessation of the pranic activity, and the stage of conscious direct control of the mind has not come. This is achieved in more subtle practices by the Jnana Yogi.

Jnana Yoga

When the sphere of Jnana Yoga is considered, it must be appreciated that at this stage in man's evolution the fruits gained long ago through Hatha Yoga are an integral part of his nature and only very modified practices are needed to maintain a body fit for further development. On the same principle, not much attention needs to be paid to Raja Yoga practices as such; at this stage the effort is to be made to control the mind itself consciously; the Samadhis gained on this level are varied and multiple and we have classified them in toto as Manomaya Samadhi, or concerning consciously the mental plane.

Whatever be the attainment from the Jnani point of view and whatever be the term used, we are classifying the Samadhis of these schools all as Manomaya Samadhi. All types and grades of Samadhi starting with the ordinary mental plane—then the higher mental plane—then the intellectual and then the intuitional are included in this classification. It is sometimes claimed that Nirvikalpa Samadhi tops all as the goal to be achieved.

Carried to its culmination in Nirvikalpa Samadhi, the body functions stop and the body is inert with no consciousness of the I at all. Others may say that either Sthitha Samadhi or Sahaj Samadhi is a higher goal. In the former type of Samadhi, the concentration stablizes to such an extent that the focus and realization of *I-ness* or the nature of the soul or of the Supreme Being remains most predominate and the mind becomes oblivious to worldly responsibilities. Sahaj Samadhi, as we have styled it, is a mixed state wherein man after experiencing the value of Nirvikalpa Samadhi, can constantly and simultaneously play in this world and the other more subtle worlds also.

How these are to be achieved may also lead to a

lengthy discussion, at least from the philosophical and psychological point of view; there are many explanations and commentaries on the grades or hierarchies of Samadhis in the Jnana field starting with the mental plane and onwards to the intuitional plane. But here we will on our part only summarize on the basis of Sri Ramakrishna's utterings.

The soul in its grossest form is full of desire when it acts in the mental sphere; mind and soul are mixed and we can say that mind is impure soul; when mind mixes with desires it loses its luster and purity. The more the mind becomes pure, the more it expresses as soul in its purity or unmixed state. On this basis, the various schools of thought classify the mental states as mental, intellectual, intuitional, etc. In the highest state, mind is nothing but pure soul itself.

We have discussed the role of Vaisnabs and the different moods or Bhavas that are experienced through their devotional practices. To achieve these moods, the devotee may establish a relationship to his or her Ishta, leading to the realization or experience of the Absolute or the Supreme Being. Ishta means a Concrete Divine *Form* carved out of the Absolute for the convenience of the devotee.

The Ishta is a form of Divinity that can represent either one or many qualities of Divinity. The devotee selects the Ishta that most nearly satisfies the highest aspirations in his nature. Through devotion to the Ishta he extracts what he wants out of the Supreme Being. Then as he develops more mature moods of love towards his Ishta, he eventually reaches the same experience of the Absolute that is the goal of the Jnani; but when he reaches the highest maturity of his practice, he not only experiences God as Absolute, about Whom nothing can be said, but he also can fall back, whenever he wants, to taste the syrup in his love for his Ishta. In this way, all of the facets of his

nature come into play: his emotional quality in love for the Ishta, his intellectual quality in realizing the greatest Reality that God is One Indivisible, together with the volitional aspect in his play with and in Divinity.

When the Bhakta—through his devotional practices—transcends the orthodox view of all the possible relationships with God, starting from the Shanta mood (calm-peaceful mood that comes from the first realization that God takes care of the devotee), to the Dasya (servant) relationship, to Batshya (filial), to Sakhya (friendship), to Madhur (love of beloved to beloved), there comes a merging of all of these love values into one value.

To describe this value or relationship with Divinity we must turn to Tantra. They say when all of these moods are converged into one value and are expressed as one mood which merges as a combination of a son's or daughter's love of mother, with a tinge of the love of beloved-to-beloved, the picture is complete. All of the variations of moods which come from the practices of the various relationships with Divinity as Person which mature into Samadhi we are classifying as Bhava Samadhi.

Sahaj Samadhi (as described in the above) when flavored with the realization that the forms in the world are all the forms of the Ishta is the highest goal; when this state reaches its peak a Samadhi like Nirvikalpa could ensue wherein the vital activities stop. Nirivikalpa Samadhi coming in this wake would be a pause between the Vijnanamayakosha and the Anandamayakosha.

Tantra

The special role of Tantra for this age is to be appreciated. Sri Ramakrishna pointed out that in this age man is short in span of life and he has less

amenities for calm meditation and practices in the other types of Yoga.

To recourse to Tantra is the obvious course since it is easy to practice and at the same time it comprises the lore of the *Vedas*, the depth of Vedanta, the Yoga practices of Patanjali and the Buddhists' wisdom and is flavored with the love and devotion of the Bhakti cult of Vaisnab. If Cosmic Conscious Energy is the last say of the universe, and if this Energy is so loving that it wants to duplicate itself to enjoy, it follows logically that it is we who are the offsprings; in other words, if we view this energy as Divine Mother we are Her sons and daughters.

In this way the Cosmic Conscious Energy is viewed as the Mother out of which we have come; it is this energy of the Mother which has given birth to us and then plays many different games with us.

Ultimately She will take us back into Her lap. This is Tantra. In following Tantra we can have all the experiences of Samadhi that all the other philosophies and religious practices give us and something more that will lead us into the new eternal Cosmic Play that is *Nitya Lila Samadhi*.

Integral Yoga and Scientific Yoga

Sri Ramakrishna gave a nice definition of Vijnana. Literally it means that which gives prompt help. He said that it is the knowledge or wisdom to know and the acumen to apply that knowledge.

He gave the following instance: we have knowledge that fire gives heat. It is Vijnana when we know how to apply that knowledge when we want to cook our food—so Vijnana Samadhi is that kind of Samadhi which gives as a boon the revelation of how to apply the particular principle or mood newly realized, either for the devotee's own further spiritual development, or for the benefit of other aspirants, or the benefit of the whole

Cosmos. It is achieved through the fruits gained from all of the Yogas coming before with an emphasis on love matured through knowledge.

The Yoga set out by Sri Aurobindo called *Integral Yoga* is the connecting link to Nitya Lila Samadhi. As we have explained in the above, the three factors of the mind, thinking, feeling and willing, are all to be developed in the ideal to be achieved. However, in the *Integral Yoga* practices set out to achieve this goal, there seems to be less emphasis on devotional love, which is not only an important component for the experience of Nitya Lila Samadhi, but an essential one.

However, at this point, we should take note of the important fact that *individual is individual*; Sri Aurobindo has chartered a path of a Divine life on earth taking into consideration all that man has achieved in evolution up to this time but always laying stress on the Jnana aspect. Time has already shown that there are many who are attracted to the practice and ideal of Integral Yoga. In this way every individual will find the system that is best suited to his nature.

*Scientific Yoga Process** was developed by this author with the expectation that it will serve as a tool to achieve the goal set out by Sri Ramakrishna for the new age to come. This system has been designed not to satisfy man by giving him what he has already achieved, but to offer a synthesis of practices and values which will take man onto the ideal of Nitya-Lila Samadhi, the new ideal given to man through the latest Incarnation.

In *Scientific Yoga*, the wisdom factor of spiritual practices has been given lesser importance and more importance has been given to grace and love. It is the expectation and prayer of this writer that all those who practice *Scientific Yoga* will in time develop a system of practice unique to his own individual nature.

*See *Scientific Yoga for the Man of Today* by Sri Surath.

Neither *Scientific Yoga* nor *Integral Yoga* can be a universal coat for every man. Any child can say that one particular type of coat of one material and one size cannot suit every person of every age and every country. We are hereby hinting that for some, *Integral Yoga* will be the ideal, for some Bhakti, for some Jnana, for some Tantra, and for some *Scientific Yoga* which will consolidate all the practices. We are also hinting that all spiritual practice should be readjusted and remodeled according to the attainment and ideal of the individual.

In the process of *Scientific Yoga* there has been an endeavor to encourage the meditator to modify the details of his practice. He makes his own selection of the object of meditation and after meditating on all the Chakras, selects the individual Chakra for special meditation, according to his own nature. At the same time, he is instructed to keep to certain basic rules that have been set out as prerequisites in the scriptures and proven through the test of time. When the basic ideals of *Scientific Yoga* are achieved, then the devotee will be ready for his own venture into Nitya Lila Samadhi.

Nothing can be said of Nitya Lila Samadhi except that it is the goal to be achieved. Every soul, individually, will then be a conscious player in the Divine Play. The game is one of eternal love in love; the practice for achieving it will be individual. The ideal will be individual, and the Play will be individual. This is the goal until the Cosmic Father shows some new dimension in eternity.

The Cosmic Player is the eternal child of God and we are that Player; in this Cosmic Play the human being is God's child, or rather God is playing as His Own Child; this child is to play, to enjoy, to create and to dance through evolution as new values are achieved.

Once a soul comes to know his part in the Cosmic Play, whether through Raja Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Bhakti

Yoga or through other religious practices, he can then joyfully play in this Cosmic Show. There is no suffering, no pain, nothing of the sort when the individual is conscious of the Play and his own part in it. Then he can live harmoniously according to the Divine Play.

Only when he goes against the Cosmic flow and the Cosmic Law does he suffer. The golden rule is to play joyfully and harmoniously in the stream of life. Samadhi is the tool for higher realization; viewing Samadhi and the action that is to follow in the highest and most subtle way, we see how they merge into a new value to become the Play of Divine bliss and joy.

CHAPTER 9

THE SECRET OF THE GITA, SAMADHI AND THE DESTINY OF MAN

All types of Samadhi that have been described in the systems of Samkhya, Patanjali, Buddhism and Vedanta are to be achieved through the volitional aspect of the human mind together with that of the intellectual aspect. In fact, the volitional or *will* factor has played the major part in the field of meditation as developed through these schools; to some degree, the intellectual factor has been used—but the feeling aspect of the mind has been almost wholly ignored. A careful study of the *Gita* will show that any practice that does not include all these aspects with the feeling aspect in particular is an incomplete approach.

As we said before, the human mind—according to modern psychologists—consists of three factors: thinking, feeling and willing. The devotional aspect which relies on the emotional or feeling factor of the mind also has its special part to play in spiritual practice. In fact, the *Gita* says that ultimately it is this highest most subtle factor that is necessary to bring all other spiritual practices to their full maturity.

How? Let us go deeply into the message of the *Gita* to find the answer.

We have already referred briefly to the action of the *Ida* (subtle nerve system stimulating thought) and of the *Pingala* (subtle nerve system stimulating action) in Chapter 4. The action of these currents as they move through the Chakras (the seven subtle nerve current centers found inside the spine and in the head) has been explained in detail in the author's previous book, *Scientific Yoga for the Man of Today*. It is not necessary for our present discussion to go into these details again here.

There are, however, two points of view we wish to present at this time. First, the beginning of what is really spiritual life starts at the Anahata (heart) center. This center—although the center with three above and three below—is not the permanent or only center of action around which the Ida and Pingala circulate.

Second, the Chakras can be related systematically to the chapters in the *Gita*. When this is appreciated, an entirely new depth can be found in the instruction given to Arjuna by Sri Krishna which has a value for every devotee.

These two clues give a new light that shows the way to the upward journey man is to take in his spiritual flight into Infinity.

The Chakras are located at the seven subtle nerve centers found within the cerebrospinal column; as man develops his higher more subtle nature, one by one the Chakras open their petals until he becomes a spiritual being. The seven centers of the cerebrospinal axis are called the Muladhara, Svadhisthana, Manipura, Anahata, Vishuddha, Ajna and the Sahasrara.

Before a man starts his spiritual life, this current circles from the bottom Chakra to the top Chakra. Then, as a person goes higher in consciousness and his base animalistic nature is no longer dominant, the current no longer circulates down to the lowest Chakra. There is no tendency to go to the Muladhara.

When the soul begins its journey to a more subtle

consciousness the current goes down only as far as the second Chakra, the Svadhisthana, and then goes up again to the Sahasrara. Gradually as man's nature becomes more subtle (with devotional and religious tendencies), it goes down only to the Manipura and circulates up again to the Sahasrara. When man is thoroughly established in spiritual life and there is a scope only for purity in his nature and he aspires after only higher values, at the low point it goes down to the heart center (the Anahata) and again goes up to the Sahasrara.

The process goes on in this way, always shortening the circle the energy is playing within, until eventually the energy stays at the Sahasrara center and man is ready for the next play into the new unknown; but as long as there is self-consciousness in the human mind, the energy must dip down sometimes to the waters in Anahata and then upwards again.

Therefore, first thing to take note of is this: when any force moves in a circle, the center is of course the key position; so, as we have said before, when the current is circulating through all seven Chakras, the Anahata center located just behind the heart is the natural center with 3 Chakras below and 3 Chakras above. At this time the current works in an oval in which the bottom is the Muldahara and the top is Sahasrara. In the life of a human being who has not started his upward surge to spiritual life it works in this way.

Meditation has a direct effect on Kundalini (serpent energy). At first, the more a person meditates the more the current quickens. In deep meditation the current again calms down; thus, in the process of meditation the nerves at first become stiff and then as the state becomes established they are relaxed. As the meditation progresses the process repeats itself; i.e., the nerves again become stiff and again are relaxed.

The reason is, as the mind is being concentrated, the

life current becomes quick in action; when no effort has to be made to hold the state of concentration, the nerves become relaxed.

This is what happens in concentration with the average person, and with such a person it is normal for all the Chakras to be worked with the heart Chakra (Anahata) as the center. That is why the heart center came to be regarded as the center of all the Chakras.

As you know, in any circular motion there is a tendency for the energy to revolve around a center point. The life activity of the man who has not yet started his upward journey follows the natural tendency, and thus his thought is controlled by the Anahata—the heart center—but in its gross aspect or in other words by his emotions.

However, the more a person concentrates, the more the action of the prana (life-force) is quickened. We should note here that the pull or power of the Sahasrara center is more powerful than the others. It is this magnetic Divine Force that pulls the action upward to the Sahasrara.

Thus, as man goes higher and higher in spiritual life, the action at the lower centers which were active in the early part of his evolution is gradually eliminated. When a person's nature becomes very subtle and his body becomes pure through meditation and devotional practices, his very self, i.e., both mind and body become divinized. At that time, as we have said, the circulation through his lower centers is eliminated altogether.

Without prana to enliven the animalistic tendencies that are normally activated through the three lower centers, there is no tendency to express on those planes. What are the indications? Such a one, for example, is not thinking of sex and desire because his lower centers are not working at all.

At this point, we must clarify that when we refer to the action of these centers, we are referring to the

mind action only. The Chakras are vehicles of subtle energy, not physical or gross action. When we discuss the spiritual life of man, we are speaking mostly of the consciousness of action. So, by the elimination of sex we mean that gradually there is less thought about sex.

It follows naturally that with less thought there is less action until finally there is none at all. The same is true of other desires.

When the lower Chakras are not working, there is little thought given to desires. The more we work with the higher Chakras (work in this context means both meditations and the study of higher ideals in scriptures, etc., as well as certain specific Yogic practices which work directly on this subtle nerve current), the more our thought and nature becomes pure. Our cells become Divinized; in this way, the subconscious desires are routed out. When the action in the lower Chakras is eliminated, desire and animalistic tendencies disappear.

In Hindu Vedic scriptures, it says there is a hierarchy of seven planes or stages of consciousness; these lower stages or planes are experienced either unconsciously or subconsciously. These seven stages are called symbolically the seven planes or seven stages in the *Vedas* or the six Chakras in the Tantra scriptures.* These range from the gross to the pure consciousness.

The gross consciousness of life is concerned with the physical plane and the Muladhara is the lowest Chakra. It is mainly concerned with the grossest physical consciousness of activity and objects. It activates the animalistic tendencies of man.

Next, a bit higher and more subtle is the Svadhisthana. The influence of this center helps man to concentrate his energies and to control his base animal-

*Orthodox Tantric term the chakras as six, calling the top one—the Saharara—when union of finite with Infinite takes place, the thousand petalled lotus of the Sahasrara; but they don't like to call it a Chakra.

istic nature to achieve the higher values; the third center, the Manipura, is still more subtle.

In other words, it is concerned with higher intrinsic values. It is at this center that man begins to feel the urge to practice religion in some form or other. The more a person thinks about subtle things whether they have or have not spiritual value, the less the lower Chakras come into play.

For example, the more a person cultivates intellectual thoughts, the more he becomes desirous of higher and more subtle things and the less he wants to deal with the base activities which have to do with lower desires. So, with conscious effort and with the help of religion and Yogic practices, a person gradually transcends the animalistic and worldly life.

When a person is gripped by any of the three lower Chakras, he is made to give much thought to the world to work, to procreate, to get bodily comfort, to get bodily rest as sleep or to give the body some food, etc. These are the animalistic qualities which by themselves are all related only to the Muladhara; however, today man is generally a mixed being—sometimes acting on a higher more subtle plane and sometimes on a more gross level.

It is not until the energy is acting not lower than the Manipura, that life with higher spiritual value begins to be appreciated. Here a sort of discrimination begins to develop little by little; when a person is acting at the Manipura center he has flashes now and then of the real spiritual life. It is not until the low point of the current comes down only as far as the heart center that a person is firmly set in spiritual values.

This is why it is said that spiritual life begins only when the Kundalini coil of Cosmic force in the human body is acting from the heart center upwards; the fourth center or Anahata becomes the lowest starting point again. You can easily see now that the center Chakra in the action of the Kundalini does not remain

the same. When the propensities of animalistic nature drop away, and the true spiritual life begins, the Anahata is no longer the center but is the lowest point of the action of the current.

We find this process of spiritual evolution explained clearly when the eighteen chapters in the *Gita* are divided into three groups of six chapters each. The chapters relate, stage-by-stage, to the activities from the Svadhisthana up to the Sahasrara. In these chapters, the ideals and principles of meditation are discussed from the angle of vision of the Karma Yogi, the Raja Yogi and the Jnana Yogi.

The first union with God is reached when the ideal and principles of these Yogas—set out in the first six chapters—are fully realized. In others words, when through Yoga the Kundalini has reached the top of the brain (the Sahasrara) this initial union takes place. The first chapter deals with the Svadhisthana, second chapter with the Manipura, third with the Anahata, etc., until, in the sixth chapter union with Divinity at the Sahasrara takes place.

When the *Gita* which literally means the song of the spiritual life of a man, is divided into 18 chapters it shows the three phases of spiritual life; as we have heretofore pointed out, the activity of the Muladhara is the expression only of animalistic instincts and propensities. Therefore, spiritual urge starts from the second center, the Svahisthana. The activity of the Muladhara is common both to man and to animals. A hitherto unnoticed fact is that the *Gita* itself tells the story of how the Kundalini rises from the Muladhara, where it has been playing with the animalistic tendencies to the Svadhisthana, to the Manipura, to the Anahata, to the Vishuddha, to the Ajna to reach the Sahasrara. In the sixth chapter it tells us that it is at the Sahasrara that we come to the first union with God (Samadhi) through Dhyana—meditation.

Twice again the Chakras are transcended until in

the 18th chapter the full maturity of God-realization is depicted. This is the last phase of human life shown to man up to that time. In this way, the *Gita* shows the stages of the spiritual ladder man is to ascend; chapter by chapter it shows how to go up and up and up. All these are given in practical descriptions.

If we refer to Hindu Tantrik scriptures, we find that the current circulating through the Chakras or lotuses takes two separate actions. These are named Ida (thought) and Pingala (action). When these two states of actions are synchronized in balance and a state of harmony exists, the two currents converge into one action in the Sushumna passage. With this process in mind the story of the *Gita* can be understood more clearly.

The first rise of the Kundalini is in the Ida; the second is in the Pingala; in the third, the two energies converge in the Sushumna—wherein as we have said—a perfect balanced state is achieved.

The first chapter shows the restlessness and despair of human life per se and the urge that is only in the beginning stage to experience life as the play of Divinity. This indicates that the energy is now circulating (in mental thinking) only as far as the Svadhisthana. The Muladhara is no longer active and we might say that man's thoughts are no longer engaged in his base animalistic needs.

The second chapter shows the state in which man attains a peaceful Satwic state. He finds himself beginning to be freed from the ego's gross desires.

The third chapter tells about the Kundalini circulating between the heart center and the Sahasrara. It is explained here how the self within is known; this is the beginning of the true spiritual life of man, when he begins to discover who he is.

In the fourth chapter the knowledge of Truth which can be gained through various practices is achieved.

At the Vishuddha Chakra the dawn of Truth begins to take shape in the mind.

In the fifth chapter comes the first glimpse of Divinity; it is at the Ajna center, the fifth center, that the soul begins to experience his unity with Divinity.

In the sixth chapter, when all obstacles to spiritual attainment are overcome through Yoga, man reaches the goal of the first union with Divinity; even in this union there is a hint given that there is something more. The devotee is told that new discoveries will come through worship and faith in Krishna as the Incarnation although up till now no mention has been made of love or devotion.

In the seventh chapter, the process starts all over again. Here it shows how the rise of the Kundalini brings more subtle achievements—the action at the Svadhistana is to know the essence of Divinity which can be known through some form of Divinity.

In the eighth chapter the action at the Manipura becomes one of discrimination so that Reality in the Absolute can be known; through discrimination the devotee finds himself on the brink of a new dimension in his spiritual life.

The ninth chapter tells how at the Anahata, the devotee is to realize that the Iswara is the key to higher realization. In the tenth chapter at the Vishuddha center comes the first idea of the everythingness of Divinity, and in the eleventh chapter, at the Ajna, there is the first glimpse of the Cosmic Form; but the devotee is not yet able to stand the vision. But he now knows that Divinity is a reality that one day he can experience.

The twelfth chapter tells how the devotee has achieved the first love union with Divinity. When the Kundalini has risen to the Sahasrara—through both the Ida and Pingala—then there is a balanced current that can rise inside the Sushumna passage.

The thirteenth chapter deals with the first stage of

the balanced state of the Ida and Pingala. The Kundalini that has been acting first, mostly in the Ida and then in the Pingala, is now in a balanced state in the Sushumna passage; the knowledge of the Kshetra (body of beings) and Kshetrajna (principle of Divinity that cognizes and governs) is possible and the One Reality is known as the Principle condensed in Divine form.

In the fourteenth chapter when the Kundalini rises in the Sushumna from the Muladhara, the three Gunas—or the three lower Chakras—are transcended never again to drag the ego into the mundane gross play.

The fifteenth chapter explains how the three Gunas are no longer commanding the play; the Self is free to know the reality of the Incarnation at last—man can now experience Divine bliss and joy in the play of Divinity wherein the finite beloved and the Infinite Beloved are playmates.

The sixteenth chapter deals with the Vishuddha Chakra where all of the Divine virtues told in the scriptures are to be realized, and in the seventeenth chapter the ego is full of love for the Incarnation—but there is still a feeling of separation. It is as if the light in the lamp is seen, but cannot be touched. At this stage, all is joyfully sacrificed to Divinity.

In the eighteenth chapter, a man is not only free from all attachments on every level, but he has reached full enlightenment; he now is in the position not only to see the Incarnation but to merge his ego Self with the Divine Self. When the Kundalini inside the Sushumna has risen to the Sahasrara, not only is the fullness of the Incarnation known, but the joyful play in love for Divinity is all encompassing and the devotee as a mature human being is ready for a new dimension in the Cosmic play.

The story of the *Gita*, as revealed by the Avatar, Sri Krishna, tells all this. When Krishna came again

as Sri Ramakrishna, he told what is to be realized when the energy in the Sushumna passage reached the Sahasrara seemingly for a motionless pause. In His message there is a hint of something more that comes after the final union as envisioned in the *Gita*.

His constant cry to Vivekananda and to others was: "Go beyond Samadhi." Sri Ramakrishna has given us a glimpse of this something that is to be realized after the fulfillment of the 18th chapter of the *Gita*. This is the Beyond of the *Gita's* message which man aspires after.

In summarizing, we can see that viewing the *Gita* in this way the 6th Chapter shows us how the first stages of God realization can be achieved through Jnana Yoga and Raja Yoga after Karma Yoga; meditation taught by the Buddhist school takes the aspirant to the goal of the sixth chapter of the *Gita* and there it finishes. There is no mention or concern about the Incarnation; there is, however, a glimpse of the stage of Samadhi realized in Raja Yoga, Jnana Yoga and Karma Yoga.

For example, in chapter 4, Verse 23 to 42, the way to achieve meditation through the control of prana is shown through these Yoga systems. The sixth chapter —on meditation—shows the converging of the goal of these three Yogas, Jnana Yoga, Raja Yoga and Karma Yoga.

Then in the seventh chapter, it is as if the student starts back again after completing his first kindergarten course; the aspirant again goes through school—as it were—progressing from one chapter to another until he perfects all the planes.

In chapter twelve, the aspirant reaches for the second time the Sahasrara, where the first glimpse comes that devotional love is higher than meditation; action and thought converge to bring devotion. The first revelation of the Cosmic Conscious Energy is revealed in Divine form; the twelfth chapter shows the Yoga of Devotion.

Coming to the thirteenth chapter, the action is once again at the Svadhisthana; the fifteenth chapter shows the beginning of the last phase of pure spiritual life. A new hint is implied in verse 18 where it is said by Krishna that He is higher than the manifested or the unmanifested.

Here the true import of an Incarnation or Avatar is told. The heart center is the beginning of this knowledge of the Incarnation and in the sixteenth chapter, the knowledge of Incarnation is further developed.

Viewing the *Gita* in this way, the reader can appreciate that the Incarnation or Avatar cannot be known through meditation only. The Karma Yogi concentrates on desireless action; Jnana Yoga and Raja Yoga also do not include devotion to God in *form* or in *formless*. Devotion comes first only in Chapter 12.

But when Devotion is mixed with God's grace, Krishna says: "I will myself be made known to you." This comes in the beginning of the third phase, where the energy is playing at the Anahata center; in the third phase (the fifteenth chapter) comes the first real knowledge of the Incarnation or Avatar.

In the first stages of devotional love the devotee does not enjoy the full knowledge of the Incarnation because God's grace is not fully there. With aspiration, however, comes more devotion. Please note that for full realization *God's grace* is needed.

The thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth chapters—which are the beginning of the third and last stage of spiritual life as far as the *Gita* is concerned—tell about both devotion and grace of God; only with these combined can the Avatar be fully known.

We find in the fifteenth chapter, 18th verse, that the Incarnation reveals Himself. So the highest spiritual life is realized in the heart center only in this third phase; it is this basis on which the heart is called the center of all centers. In the eighteenth chapter—when the Kundalini has finally risen to the Sahasrara—this spiritual life culminates in the higher Samadhi.

The first Samadhi that can be truly considered to be on the highest spiritual plane comes in the third phase (the fifteenth chapter) that is at the heart center.

To summarize, the *Gita* is the song of the spiritual life of Man. The *Gita* is divided into eighteen chapters and these are subsequently divided into three phases of spiritual life, corresponding to the division of the *Gita*—Chapters 1-6, 7-12 and 13-18.

These are the subtle, subtler and most subtle phases of spiritual life; each of these series starts with the Svadhisthana Chakra to go up the Sahasrara.

Although meditation alone brings some sort of Samadhi, a more subtle phase of spiritual life starts with the seventh chapter and culminates in the Yoga of Devotion Love. Thus, we find that devotional love added to Jnana meditation is higher than the Samadhi experienced with meditation through Jnana Yoga, Raja Yoga and Karma Yoga. When the fruits of these practices are achieved the third and final phase in spiritual life begins. In the thirteenth chapter the energy now centered in the Sushumna starts again with the Svadhisthana and goes from the fourteenth, the Manipura, to the fifteenth, the Anahata center. The energy leaves the Svadhisthana and the Manipura for good and the senses no longer act in the gross world.

Now we have a true glimpse of the Avatar. Why does this glimpse come in the fifteenth chapter? Because only when devotional love matures and the mind is turned inward without distractions does Divinity come in full, to reveal Himself.

A person who has come to that stage understands what and who the Avatar or Incarnation is, as well as what is the reality of the Cosmic show, and the final fulfillment for the human being begins at that stage. Meditation, then, is flavored with the highest devotional love—and through the Grace of God a higher state of Samadhi comes.

Again, we want to emphasize the importance of Di-

vine grace. Raja Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Karma Yoga are combined together to be saturated with the descent of Divine grace; only through this grace can the devotee know and love the Avatar. This truth is revealed in the fifteenth through the eighteenth chapter and this is the last phase of *human* life. The mind has reached its first complete maturity and what this culminates in is something new that is not described in the *Gita*.

Now that we have established how the instruction for climbing the ladder to God realization is given in the *Gita*, let us explore the philosophy and instruction.

In the Invocation to the *Bhagavad Gita* it says: "I salute the Source of Supreme Bliss whose grace makes the dumb eloquent and the crippled to cross mountains."

When a Yogi gets rid of all desires and his mind or Chitta discards all mental modifications, all thought processes, and simply becomes absorbed in the Self, then Samadhi is attained; this description of the state of Samadhi should be carefully noted and meditated upon.

In Samadhi, the mind finds itself in a place where there is no movement that disturbs it. Just as the flame of a lamp is steady while burning inside the lantern chimney, so when a Yogi is able to concentrate on an object the thought process will not quiver or waver.

If such practice is continued, he eventually gets rid of all thought processes. His inner self becomes purified and knowledge comes spontaneously. His complexion becomes resplendent with a glow that can be easily observed.

The Buddhi (the power of knowing or intellect) is 'located' between the mind and the soul itself. The Buddhi rejects the worldly objects, both internal and external, to give the Yogi the realization of the Supreme Being; when the latter has cut his mind off from the awareness of both the internal and external objects and at last has found his own identity with the

Supreme Being, he remains in a blissful state and is not distrubed by any outer or inner stimulants as long as he remains in this state.

This state is such a joy to him that he despises any other gain or experience in the material gross world as inferior. Even when confronted with worldly misery or worldly calamities, he is never disturbed. This is the stage when the person takes refuge in Divinity. When a person finally becomes established in this blissful mood, it never leaves him; this is Manomaya Samadhi.

But this is not the end. No, the *Gita* goes on to prescribe deeper and higher practices; however, Krishna warns the aspirant not to be in a hurry. The desire world and the desire-ridden mind must be slowly dissolved; all those desires thrust on him by the senses, both internal and external, are finally to be expelled by the mind.

The aspirant with much patience gradually controls the lower desires by the power of Buddhi, or by fixing the attention on the Self. The next stage is to be a gradual one also, and should first be established wherein the Buddhi is dissolved into the soul itself; when this is achieved, the mind does not think at all. In other words, all mental modifications are finally stopped. This is the goal in Samadhi for the Jnana Yogi. Then *I-ness* is finally merged into Infinity.

In the *Gita* both Jnana Yoga and Raja Yoga are harmonized. Many students of truth, are familiar with the term Kriya Yoga as it is revealed in Indian scriptures.

Kriya Yoga is a technique taught by Self-Realization Fellowship, the organization established by Paramahansa Yogananda; it is interesting to note that this technique of Kriya Yoga actually finds its origin in the *Gita*. It has been rediscovered from the *Gita* by Babaji, and then simplified for the man of today by Lahiri Mahasaya.

If the whole technique of Kriya Yoga is scanned, it is evident that it is a practice primarily of Raja Yoga with some steps which are akin to Bhakti. Because there is also a touch of Jnana, Kriya Yoga can be considered as bordering on Jnana Yoga—which is based on the Samkhya system of evolution—and which practice is found in the Patanjal system; these are all beset with difficulties which the *Gita* anticipates and offers remedies for.

It tells that whenever the mind becomes disturbed and tries to go in some direction other than that needed for a particular meditation, the aspirant consciously is to draw the mind back. For example, if one is meditating on the cross, he may suddenly perceive that his mind is going elsewhere other than in the direction intended; it may go to the enjoyment of a movie.

Then he is at once to draw the mind back from that object, and again to concentrate on the cross. This constant practice of drawing back the mind time-after-time gradually makes the aspirant more powerful and more steadfast until his concentration is gradually achieved. The rest of Chapter 6 describes how a person enjoys a blissful state when he becomes a perfect Yogi; in the *Gita* it is stated and restated that it is very difficult to attain this state of concentration.

The mind is naturally restless. Like a gust of wind moving here and there, it is difficult to control and Krishna tells us that in the same way the mind is a very disturbing and turbulent thing. Still we are advised that just two things are necessary, constant practice and desirelessness.

The *Gita* further tells us that if we can get rid of desire for both internal and external objects and if we constantly practice concentration, Samadhi will undoubtedly be attained. Then Arjuna asked Lord Krishna if everything is lost when a person full of respect and confidence starts such effort, but gives it up for some reason or other before attaining Samadhi; is he lost

forever? Maybe he lacks the patience or full perseverance in that particular method or perhaps he changes to another method. What happens?

Krishna replied that neither he nor his efforts are lost; whenever good is done, it is never lost. Any gain scored serves as a stepping-stone for the next life. Such a person will find that either in his present life or in his next life he will have gained a certain state, and henceforth is given a more advantageous position to start again—and to go higher.

If he dies while practicing—but before achieving—the goal, he will, in his next life, have a good birth to help him go forward, and will easily find Yogis, Sadhus or saints who will help him in his progress.

So we see that the *Gita* is a cryptic record which offers us many higher truths. Although it is hard for a beginner to understand its depth, still there are many aids given at every level to those who are desiring Samadhi and higher realization. Even though the *Gita* is said to have been a source of techniques for meditation for teachers and sages of old, still it stands in its original form with many valuable suggestions applicable to us today.

The practices and descriptions of the states of realization described in the *Gita* are difficult to appreciate before some progress has been made by the aspirant through his meditations; however, we are offering here this knowledge to serve as a boon to man's impatience to know before he practices. The few tidbits we are giving only point to the vast storehouse of treasure in the Hindu scriptures that is available to any one who seriously wants to know.

Of course, for the exact *practice* of any of the intricate systems of Yoga, there must be a master or a teacher beside the devotee, who has himself perfected the art. Much constant guidance is needed. If an aspirant (either in the East or in the West) is truly sincere, a master or teacher will always be available;

if the teacher does not come, the aspirant can look to himself to see how intent he really is.

The eighteenth chapter of the *Gita*, containing Verses 64, 65, 66, is the cream of the whole *Gita*; it is called the category of complete and final self-surrender. In chapter 18, verse 64, Krishna tells for the last time what is the profoundest truth of all. "Since You are beloved to Me since you love Me more, that is why I am telling this highest truth to you for the last time."

Note the words significantly: "Since you are *beloved* to Me." If Arjuna had been exclusively a Jnana Yogi and not a lover, this highest truth would not have been revealed by Krishna to Arjuna. Second, Sri Krishna said: "Steadfast in loving Me, is another reason I reveal this highest Truth that I now divulge to you."

It signifies that the ultimate goal in spiritual life is constant love with no interrogation; then and then only, God takes complete care of that person. *Devotion to the Incarnation is the highest truth.* In other words, the significant thing is this *trust* in love which is most beneficial to a person, irrespective of his attainment.

Verse 65 tells how to attain self-surrender. What is the highest good? "Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, sacrifice to Me, prostrate to Me, so shall thou come to Me. This is My pledge to you because you are dear to Me." Every word is significant, one by one: "Fix your mind on Me, . . . devoted to Me, . . . for you are dear to Me." In these words, "My" "Me" indicate that when Krishna is telling these things to Arjuna, He is speaking as an Incarnation; the Supreme Being in unmanifested state cannot say anything as a Person to a person.

Sri Krishna makes it clear that the highest form of Yoga is love for the Incarnation. He tells lovingly that fixing attention on and surrendering to any deity is always helpful and brings results, unless you do it for

some personal desire. But love for the Incarnation has a further significance. This presupposes *two*—not one—in Infinity.

There must be the lover and the beloved for the Supreme Being to find Its full value. Yes, the Infinite and the finite embrace one another, then separate; apart and together, they embrace over and over again, and the play continues forever, but always gaining something new.

So both the Bhakta and the Jnani become merged into Infinity, but not as a salt doll into the ocean to be lost forever. In a mysterious way the salt doll retains its identity, and refreshed and renovated, it is there for the Eternal Play—until one day it becomes something more.

This is the perpetual Cosmic Play of joy of the Absolute as such; the Divine Beloved plays eternally with the finite beloved. Dissolution—as it is commonly understood—is not the ultimate goal; dissolution is in reality only transformation to something higher.

So to sum up, the *Gita* emphasizes that ultimately Incarnation's love to devotee and devotee's love to Incarnation are the best keys to spiritual life.

And the next point is equally important. Verse 66 of Chapter 18. Again, every word here is full of value and the depth of profound knowledge. It says: "Renounce all Dharmas and take refuge in Me and I shall liberate you from all sins, grieve not." Since the goal has been given to Arjuna by Sri Krishna to renounce all Dharma we must ask what does this mean? It means this: the practice of Dharma in relation to different deities in expectation of gaining something should be given up. In fact, desires and even the highest ritualistic worships are not wanted. Practices have now served their respective purposes, and a new relationship with Divinity is there.

At first, the Bhaktas naturally are inclined to practice rituals. These are helpful to an extent in the be-

ginning; yet as one proceeds, he will find these are not only unnecessary, but that they begin to be a bondage. Eventually, if the devotee sticks long enough to his practice, he is likely to find that he is not worshiping his Beloved God through rituals but is worshiping the ritual itself.

He's worshiping the ceremony, forgetting all about God; the rituals and ceremonies have replaced God, and therefore, in the last and highest stage, the rituals and ceremonies should also be given up. One need not do the Pujas, the Japas, and the chantings. The union with the Divine Beloved is so intimate, so beautiful, that only the play of bliss and joy remains.

Next point is: "Take refuge in Me," thereby indicating that Sri Krishna is truly an Incarnation of God and it is only the Incarnation and not *God in other forms or deities* who must be in the end loved. God as the Incarnate gives the clue that Incarnation is the last refuge. Then He says, "If you do that I shall absolve you from all sins."* Sin includes all our past misdeeds against the evolutionary process: that is, any wrong action done as a member of a family, a member of society, a member of the community, a member of the nation. In social, family, spiritual and political fields, all misdeeds are removed. Even the *effects* of all misdeeds are removed. If the devotee completely loves and takes refuge in an Incarnation, not only the sins in the spiritual field are forgiven, but the effect of the wrong deeds in other spheres is also gone.

We should note that Sri Krishna tells that *He* liberates. The *Incarnate* liberates. We do not liberate ourselves; our duty is simply to take refuge in Him lovingly and He promises to liberate us forthwith. The last words "Grieve not," are the most significant aspect given in Hinduism; this is in contrast to the Christian thought wherein words sin and sinner are

*Christ also as an Incarnation said the same thing.

emphasized; the command to love the Incarnation and the promise to remove sins is also given.

But Christianity has long put emphasis on repentance, self-mortification. All these things for purification are the negative aspect. Hinduism lays emphasis on the positive aspect. Christianity says: "Don't sin." Hinduism says: "Love God and sin automatically goes. Repentance is not necessary because all are absolved in loving surrender to the Incarnation."

The *Gita* gives us the clue as to how we can achieve Samadhi, and what the obstacles are; it also charts out—clearly—various practices that lead to Samadhi. Unless there is Divine Grace, there is no experience of Samadhi.

Arjuna was Krishna's closest friend, and Krishna took exact care to give him special instructions for spiritual practices. Arjuna also did a lot of penances; yet even with all these advantages, at this stage he could not have a high state of Samadhi or even the experience of Cosmic Consciousness which is a lesser experience.

From the second chapter of the *Gita* to the fifth chapter, the Lord Krishna tells Arjuna in detail the ideals of Jnana Yoga, Karma Yoga and makes some reference to Raja Yoga; he also charts some ways of practice. In chapter six Krishna elaborates on Raja Yoga and develops the art of meditation in more detail; and in the seventh and eighth chapters, Krishna matures Arjuna for deeper spiritual experiences, by revealing who He is, what His qualities are and how experience acts to mature man. In Chapter 8 He emphasizes His relationship with the Unmanifest and Imperishable and points out the two paths that take man to his goal of the supreme and primal abode.

Now Arjuna—even with all this high teaching from the Lord Himself—had not yet seen the Lord in His true nature. He then insisted on having such realization. It appears that at first Krishna was not very agreeable,

because He knew that unless a person really matures through the power of meditation and other Yogic practices until there is a complete change, and the physical cells have become divinized cells, it is not an appropriate time to have full God-realization.

But Arjuna did not understand this; his inquiry seemed to be: "Why, if you are the Lord, can you not show me? What is the difficulty?" So just to teach Arjuna and, incidentally, to show the whole of humanity, Krishna revealed His Cosmic nature. Arjuna cried out in pain and requested Krishna to show Himself again as the Incarnation in physical form.

In the latter chapters Krishna explains that the attainment of this higher consciousness is not accomplished by learning the scriptures, or by penances and practices; it is given by Divine grace. This truth is also explained in the *Kathopanisad.* The first point is that the aspirant must prepare himself, and should not grumble that he has no realization.

He must practice in a disciplined way for sufficient time, until his cells have undergone the change and have become fit to carry the Divine power that comes with realization. The second point is noticing what happens if the cells are not matured. Arjuna became filled with fear; he couldn't bear the shock of what he saw. He cried: "Please stop. Enough! Enough!"

The sudden impact of realization without proper development is as if 2000 volts of electricity has been put through a wire fit for only 50 volts. That is why Arjuna urgently requested to see Krishna once again in human form; unless the cells are changed and the person is made fit for such realization, this realization and grace does not come. If you tear the bark away, there is a wound and the life energy in the form of sap comes out.

If you do not wait for the proper delivery of a child, either it dies or at best there is hard struggle to hold on to life; in short, the advice is this: don't be a

naughty child and force Divinity to give you something you are not ready for. Wait for the proper time; but always do some spiritual practice.

We have given only a few hints of the depth and profoundity of the *Gita* but the treasures found therein have given us many clues to Samadhi.

CHAPTER 10

EXPERIENCE OF SAMADHI

Translation of Vivekananda's "A Song on Samadhi" from p. 39 in *Search of God and Other Poems*. Published by Swami Chidatmananda, President Advaita Ashrams Mayavati, Almora, Himalayas.

"Lo! The sun is not, nor the comely moon,
All light extinct; in the great void of space;
Floats shadow-like the image-universe.

In the void of mind involute, there floats
The fleeting universe, rises and floats,
Sinks again, ceaseless, in the current 'I'

Slowly, Slowly, the shadow-multitude
Entered the primal womb, and flowed ceaseless,
The only current, the 'I am,' 'I am.'

Lo! 'Tis stopped, ev'n that current flows no more,
Void merged into void—beyond speech and mind!
Whose heart understands, he verily does."

The Author Describes His Experience of Samadhi:

Samadhi is an individual experience, and will necessarily feel different to each and every aspirant. As has often been said, words cannot express Samadhi; feelings cannot be explained in words. In fact, if it is impossible to say exactly what an orange tastes like, it is certainly a million times more difficult to express what Samadhi feels like. However, we shall try here to give some hints.

When the mind is focussed and still, the conscious awareness goes to a more subtle region; there is a subtle feeling of a flood of light. The body and light are one.

(Editor's note: At this point the author slipped into Samadhi and there is an intimate personal aspect in the following that is not found in the rest of the book; for awhile, he was notionless and apparently without outer consciousness, and when he had come down to normal level, he said what he could, which was very little about what he was experiencing.)

The body, the mind, everything dissolves as if in the inundation of lava, flowing all over the universe. The *I* feels as if it is melting in that lava which is golden, purple, yellow color, beautiful, soothing, engulfing, full of light and as the I melts, it is as if it is palpitating in the sustained waves; the I feels as if that golden lava, that inundation of lava, has covered everything.

Or there is a feeling that the I is converted into sound, it has become sound; a gong or a flute. The sound is eternal although it is moving away and the I is that sound.

Or the I has become a perpetual, blissful taste and this state cannot be explained at all; it is as if the whole being has become taste.

Or the I exists as a flood or fragrance coming from thousands and thousands of flowers floating in the uni-

verse; the I floating as if in a wave of fragrance with them; the I exists only as fragrance.

These feelings converge so that it seems like the whole Cosmos is flowing from nothing to nothing. Vivekananda expressed these feelings as being so bright that sunlight is less overflooding than it. The moon is less soothing.

How Samadhi Feels:

*The fire is not much to compare to the all-engulfing flood of light and knowledge.** This hints at what Samadhi is. It is almost on a par of the physical; still it is not physical, because the cells have to be in a Divinized state in order for the experience to manifest. It is physical only in that the impression on the physical cells remains. Thus, the experience can be said to be on the verge of physical—yet it is not physical in the ordinary way. But it is a reality. The physical world has become the unreality. In Samadhi one has to sacrifice the physical world.

As we have explained in the introduction, creation comes in the act of Samadhi which is a halting station and a springboard. A man pausing just before his dive has to sum up his energy, sacrifice his desire to go back, along with every other desire and thought process before he makes the final plunge.

Just so, a man aspiring for Samadhi has to brush aside all his desires and all that he has been before. In his Samadhi, he is joining the Creator in His Eternal Samadhi. The Creator sacrifices in His Samadhi all other aspects of life just to manifest for the dive into the creation of a new life, a new manifestation. In other words, at the beginning of creation, God pauses just for a moment like the diver pausing before his dive—then there is the splash of creation.

This moment of the new creation, together with the cessation of all other activities, is the Samadhi of the Creator. So whenever a person is in Samadhi or in a

state of deep concentration, he is participating and cooperating with the Infinite Beloved as He is creating a new idea. Man in Samadhi, and in deep meditation, is helping the Creator at the Idea level—where a new shape comes into being.

The world comes through the constant manifestation of the Cosmic Being's realization. When a man participates in this Samadhi through concentration, he is sacrificing his physical and mental needs; there is a pause for a moment while he merges with Divinity. In this concentrated mood, he joins with the Creator to create a new world of ideas which would then manifest themselves in the world of the next day. This is the process in Samadhi.

This is the highest form of worship known to man. Samadhi is not just a state or a station. It is a starting point for a new state of activity.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say: "Go beyond Samadhi." But unless you have a deep love for God you cannot sacrifice all of what you have thought yourself to be. Samadhi is not the end of realization; it is a sacrifice. Jesus went into meditation and then into Samadhi just before His crucifixion. In this Samadhi, a new pattern for a new creation was set and He offered Himself as a living sacrifice to execute this new pattern projected by Divinity. As He tuned himself with God, He participated in the new idea of resurrection in a physical divinized body for the Christian world and for all of humanity.

It is as if man is a current or stream of water, running parallel to a large river—say the Mississippi River or the Colorado River; one day a clever engineer cuts a link between the smaller current and the larger river. Thus, the little stream is carried along and the larger river is able to flow more broadly and more swiftly.

Mind is like the little current. When a link is cut

between it and the Eternal River, the finite mind joins with the Infinite Stream and participates with the Eternal Current. This participation is called Samadhi, a state of unspeakable joy.

It is something like this. As I was sitting by the window, looking out at the torrents of the monsoon rain, I felt I was leaving myself and gradually melting into the vast rainy sky outside. Who knows? What does it indicate?

At least by the fall of the rain outside, ceaseless, noisy, I could find the vastness within; I could hear the primordial sound Anahata. I could easily get in touch with the Beloved beyond. The rain fell from the sky; it establishes a link, a communion; I felt it. I was in it. I was it. I was the luminous soul pervading with the Beloved, the Cosmos. There was no more consciousness of pain, no feeling of the body, no hope, no despair, no pain . . . nothing, only a one pointed feeling of undifferentiated bliss, in tune with the joyous Cosmos. Let it communicate! Let it go! Let it be beyond! Let it overwhelm!

In order to give the readers a more intimate relationship with Sri Ramakrishna Himself, we are including in this chapter some intimate descriptions of Sri Ramakrishna recorded personally by one of His most intimate disciples, a Bhakta Yogi and a householder known as M (Mahendra Gupta).

M methodically recorded in Bengali the day to day happenings and words of Sri Ramakrishna as he personally witnessed them, at Dakshineswar and other places during the last three years of Sri Ramakrishna's life. In 1907 a part of this record was translated and published in English by M personally. Since these particular descriptions have such an intimate and sensitive touch, although perhaps not in the polished style of the English of today, the author is offering them verbatim here. M's complete recordings in Bengali have been nicely translated into English in their en-

tirety by Swami Nikhilananda, THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, Feb. 25, 1944.

The following passages are taken verbatim from:

Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna
(According to M., a son of The Lord and disciple)
or
The Ideal Man For India
and
For The World
Part I

Madras
Published by the Brahmavadin Office
1907

"It is about five in the afternoon. Coming back to the verandah, north of the Master's chamber, M. cometh upon a strange sight. The Master is standing still. Narendra is singing a hymn. He and three or four other disciples all remain standing with the Master in their midst.

"M. is charmed with the song. Never in his life hath he heard a sweeter voice. Looking at the Master, M. marvels and becomes speechless. The Master standeth motionless with eyes that move not. It is hard to say whether he doth breathe!

"This state of divine ecstasy, saith a disciple, is called *Samadhi*. M has never seen this nor has he ever heard of this. He thinketh within himself saying 'Is it possible that the thought of God maketh a man forget the world? How great must be his Faith and his Love for God who is put into such a state!' "

(From Gospel P-57-58)

Song

1. "O, my mind, meditate thou upon the Lord the essence of spirit, Him who is free from all impurity.

Unparallelled is His glory, charming is His shape, dear is He now to the heart of devotees!

2. "Behold, His beauty is enhanced by fresh manifestations of Love! It putteth into the shade the lustre of a million moons put together! Verily, the lightning flasheth out of this Glorious Beauty, and the Blessed Vision causeth the hairs to stand on end.

"The Master is deeply touched when this line of the song is chanted forth. The hairs on his body actually stand on end. His eyes are bedewed with tears of joy. The smiles on his lips show the ecstatic delight that he feeleth at the sight of the Blessed Vision. Yes, He must be enjoying a vision of unequalled Beauty which putteth into the shade the refulgence of a million moons! Is this God-vision? If so, what may be the intensity of Devotion and of Faith, of the discipline and the austerities which may bring such a vision within the reach of mortal man?

The song went on—

3. "Worship His Holy Feet on the lotus of thy heart. Behold the Beloved Form of matchless beauty now that the mind enjoyeth peace and the eyes are filled with Divine Love!

"That bewitching smile once more! Behold, His body is motionless! His eyes are half closed and fixed, as it were, upon vacancy. It seemeth as if he beholdeth some strange vision—of things that are beyond the sense-world—and is thus filled with Ecstasy!

"The song cometh to its close. Narendra singeth forth the last lines—

"Inspired with love Divine be immersed, O my mind, in the sweetness of Him who is the Fountain of Absolute Intelligence and Bliss.

"M. wendeth his way back home with this unique picture in his mind of *Samadhi* and of ecstasy of Divine Love. The sweet music which went to his heart bubbleth up, as it were, from time to time as he goeth along:—

"Be incessently merged, O my mind in the sweetness of His Love and Bliss. Yes. Be drunken with the joy of the Lord!"

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(From Gospel P-61)

"He (Sri Ramakrishna) singeth of Hanuman's renunciation—of the world and its pleasures—and as he singeth, loseth all sense-consciousness.

"He is now in a state of Samadhi—the superconscious or God-conscious state. The body is again motionless! the eyes are fixed! He is seated just like we see Him in the photograph.

"The boys were only a moment ago, laughing and making merry! Now they all look grave. Their eyes are fixed steadfastly on the Master's face. They marvel at the unheard-of wonderful change that hath come over the Master. M seeth the Master in *Samadhi* for the second time.

"It taketh Him long to come back to the sense world. Rama (God-Incarnate). M. thinketh to himself, 'Was it this God-Man who was only a few moments back sporting with the boys like a five-year old child?"

(From Gospel P-239-243)

"One of the songs hath a particular reference to tne Six Lotus Wheels marking the different stages of progress towards Union with the Universal Soul.

"At the end of this song, the Master saith:—

"The six wheels mentioned in the *Yoga* system of the *Tantras* correspond with the seven mental planes mentioned in the *Vedas*.

"When the mind is immersed in worldliness, it

maketh its abode in the 1st, the anus, 2nd, the sexual organ, and 3rd, the navel.

"In the 4th plane the abode of the mind is the heart. The man is blessed with the Vision of Divine Glory and crieth out, *What is all this! what is all this?*

"In the 5th plane, the place of the mind is the throat. The devotee talketh only on subjects related to God and getteth impatient if any other subject cometh up before him in the course of conversation.

"In the 6th plane the mind is localized between the eyebrows. The devotee cometh face to face with God; only a thin glass-like partition, so to speak, keepeth him apart from the Divine Person. To him God is like a light within a lantern or the photograph behind a glass frame. He seeketh to touch the Vision, but he cannot. His perception falleth short of complete realization, for there is the element of self-consciousness retained to a certain extent.

"In the last or 7th plane it is perfect *Samadhi*. Then all sense-consciousness ceaseth and pure God-consciousness taketh its place. In this state the life of the Saint lingereth for twenty-one days, after which he passeth away. During these days he ceaseth to take any food. Milk, if poured into his mouth, runneth out and never getteth into the stomach.

"The Master continueth:—

"Some who may have got on to the seventh or the highest plane and have thus become lost in God-consciousness are pleased to come down from that spiritual height with a view to the good of mankind.

"They keep the *Ego* (I) of Knowledge or, in other words, the Higher Self. But this *Ego* is a mere appearance. It is like a line drawn across a sheet of water.

"Hanuman was blessed with the vision of God both with form and without form. But he retained the *Ego* of a servant of God.

"Such was also the case with the Saints Narad, Sanak, Sananda and Sanat Kumar.

"Here the question was asked whether Narad and others worshipped God as dualists and did not realize him as God, the Absolute.

"The Master saith:

"Narad and others had attained the Highest Knowledge. But still they went on like the murmuring waters of the rivulet to talk and to sing. This showeth that they too kept this *Ego* of Knowledge.

"They were knowing ones and also devotees: they talked and sang about the Lord with a view to the good of others.

"A 'steamboat' not only getteth to its *own place of destination, but also carrieth* numbers of people on board to the same place.

"Preceptors like Narad are like 'steamboats.'

"The Highest Teachers may be divided into two classes:

"1st.Those that declare the Supreme Being as the Formless One. Trailinga Swami belongeth to this class. Generally speaking, holy men of this class are comparatively selfish, so to speak. They care only for the liberation of their own soul.

"Those of the second class say that God is with Form as well as Formless, and that He manifesteth Himself to His devotees as a Being with Forms.

"Have you ever seen a water-passage running over with the water of the river with which it is joined?

"The passage hath sometimes no trace left, being entirely one with the river-water. But very often there may be noticed a slight movement in its water which proveth its separateness from the river-water.

"Pretty much the same is the case with the Teacher belonging to the second class. His soul becometh one with the Universal Soul. *Still* there is this *Ego* of knowledge *kept on*—a slight trace of individuality to mark his separate existence from the Deity.

"Again such a Teacher may be compared to a jar or pitcher of water when it is filled to the brim. At the

same time its contents or part of its contents may be transferred to another vessel. The disciple is the second vessel. The pitcher filled to the brim indicates the perfect state derived from the Highest knowledge.

"Thus the *Ego* of knowledge is kept for the purpose of teaching others the saving truths of Religion.

"Again suppose a person diggeth a well. He is thirsty and drinketh of the water of the well. It is not unusual for such a person to keep with him the digging implements, i.e., the hoe, the shovel, the spade, etc., for the sake of others who may want them for the same object. In the same way a Teacher of the second class who may have drunk the waters of Everlasting Life and may have thus quenched his spiritual thirst (i.e., come to the perfection of Brahma-Jnan) is often anxious to do good to mankind. With this view he retaineth the *Ego* of knowledge, the *Ego* of *Bhakti*, the *Ego* of Preceptor.

"Some persons eat mangoes and take away all traces of eating by wiping their mouth with a towel. These persons care only for their own selves. But there are others who are sure to share the mangoes with other people whenever they eat them.

"This was precisely the mental attitude of the Gopis of Brindaban. They always desired to retain the power of tasting the Love of Sri Krishna. To them He was the Thing to be enjoyed, i.e., spiritually. They wanted to be the persons enjoying. So sang *Ram Prasad*, "I would much prefer to *eat* the sugar to *being* the sugar itself."

"It is a case of Involution and Evolution. Ye go backwards to the Supreme Being and your personality becometh lost in His Personality. This is *Samadhi*. Ye then retrace your steps. Ye get back your *ego* (Personality) and come back to the point whence ye started only to see that the world and your ego of self were involved in the same Supreme Being, and that God, Man and Nature (or the world) are mere

identities, so that if ye hold to one of them, ye realize the others.

"Call with Bhakti upon His Hallowed name and *the mountain of your sins shall go out of sight*, much as a mountain of cotton will burn and vanish if it but catcheth one spark of fire."

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(From Gospel P-368-369)

"I see, I realize, that all the three come of one Substance,—the victim to be sacrificed, the block for sacrifice, and he who cutteth down the victim for sacrifice.

"Doth the Master say that He offereth Himself as sacrifice for the sake of mankind and that it is the Lord that manifesteth Himself as the victim for sacrifice?

"Saying this the Master crieth out in a feeble voice, "Ah me! Ah me! What a Vision!"

"The state of God-consciousness once more! The Master hath departed from the sense-world! The state of ecstasy is not good for Him; so, think the disciples. But they know not what to do.

"He hath again come to the world of the senses. He sayeth, "Now I am free from suffering of any kind. I am as well as ever.

"The disciples see that He hath passed into a state which is beyond joy and grief, happiness and misery.

"Latoo hangeth down his head which resteth on the palm of his hand, as he watcheth the Master with a sorrowful heart.

"The Master lifteth up His eyes and looketh on the disciples. His heart overfloweth with the unspeakable love that He beareth towards His darlings—a love that the world cannot give—a love that passeth all human understanding.

"Rakhal and Narendra! How He doth fondle them! He stroketh their face and caresseth them as if they

were children five years old!"

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(From Gospel P-317-319)

"What a miracle passeth before the eyes of the disciples! Look on the Master, and see how His sense-consciousness beginneth to leave Him! Look again, and see it hath left Him altogether! Is this the half-outer-consciousness spoken of about Gouranga (Chaitanya), God of Love-Incarnate at Nadia! Even now, the Master's hand continueth to rest on Narendra's body! Is He actually engaged in serving God (Narendra) manifest in the man before him the Inspiration, the Power, that cometh from above.

"Look! Yet other changes come over the Master! Behold what He sayeth to Narendra with folded hands! A song (do thou sing): then I shall be restored—how else shall I be able to stand on my legs?—my Nitya!—O! He is deep drunk intoxicated with the wine of Divine Love, the Love for Gouranga (God Incarnate).

"A short while and He is speechless again—speechless like a figure cut out of marble! *Drunk* within the joy of the Lord, the Master goeth on saying—

"Take care, Radha, lest thou fallest into the Jamuna, O! Thou mad with ecstatic love for Him who hath incarnated Himself at Brindaban, the Lord Sri Krishna!

"Once more in deep Samadhi! getting back into sense-consciousness He repeateth portions of a well-known song—

"O! my friend how far is that Blessed Woodland (the land where is to be seen my own Beloved One)?

"(Behold; here cometh the fragrance from the Blessed Person of my Beloved!)

"('I am unable to take any step forward, Oh my friend!')

"Now He hath lost all sense of the world—he doth not bear in mind any thing or any person in His present state—Narendra is seated before Him, but apparently He doth not see him. He hath lost all sense of time and place! The mind and the heart and the Soul have all become absorbed in God!

"Behold, He standeth up saying, "Deep drunk with the wine of Divine Love, with love for the Fair Lord!" A few moments and He taketh his seat.

"He sayeth, Yonder is a light coming this way—but I cannot even now say which way the light cometh from. It is now that Narendra goeth on with the song."

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(From Gospel P-200-202)

"On the 16th of June 1884, Sunday, the sixth lunar day (dark fortnight) of Jaishtha, Sri Ramakrishna was invited by one of his beloved disciples Surendra, a householder, to a feast made at his garden-house at Kankurgachi near Calcutta. These invitations were invariably occasions for the gathering of His disciples, would-be disciples and His admirers. They were really occasions of festivities and rejoicing, on which the Name of God was chanted to the accompaniment of mridangas and other musical instruments. All the while the Master could be seen at His best,—singing, dancing, with the joy of the Lord and frequently lost in that blessed state of the soul, in the enjoyment of God-consciousness, called *Samadhi*.

"When the singing of devotional hymns and the spiritual excitement which came with it were over, the company present was treated by the Master to one of those celestial conversations laden with sermons for the spiritual welfare of humanity—to a veritable feast of reason and flow of soul—which will never die in the memory of those that had the rare good fortune, the privilege, to listen to them.

"The first part of the day was given to Sankirtan (the singing forth of the Name of the Lord). They were singing the songs telling of the separation of the gopis from the Lord Krishna who had gone to Mathura.

"The gopis were the milkmaids of Brindaban who loved the Lord Sri Krishna then living in their midst as shepherd-boy. Sri Krishna is looked upon as an Incarnation of God. He loved and was loved by everybody. He is the Impersonation of Divine Love. When eleven years old he left Brindaban.

"In the course of the songs the Master was frequently put in a state of Samadhi (divine ecstasy).

"They are singing. Suddenly He rises to His feet saying "O my friend, do thou bring my beloved Krishna to me, or take me over to the place where He is,"

"The Master hath lost his own personality in that of Radha, chief of the gopis. He realizeth that He and Radha are One.

"With these words He standeth speechless and motionless, with fixed, half-closed eyes that move not, evidently losing all sense-consciousness. Coming to Himself He again, in a voice that draweth tears from the eyes of those that hear Him, crieth out, 'O my friend, do me this favor and I shall be thy most devoted servant. Remember it was thou that taughtest me my love for the Beloved.'

"The chorus goeth on singing. Radha is made in the song to say 'O! I will not go to the bank of the Jamuna to draw water; for coming up to the Kadamba tree I am put in mind of my Own, my Beloved.'

"The Master, heaving a sigh, saith 'Ah me!' The chorus chanting aloud the Name of the Lord. Sri Ramakrishna is again on His feet and in Samadhi.

"Getting back His sense-consciousness, He can only say inarticulately 'Kistna, Kistna' for Krishna, Krishna. The proceedings are brought to a close by the Master Himself leading the chorus in the well-known piece

'Victory to Radha. Victory to Govinda.' He danceth with His disciples who form a ring round him."

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(From Gospel P-86-90)

"At the end of this hymn the Master is once more found to be in that Indescribable Region of Samadhi. The sweet angelic voice hath become still. The outer-eyes have become fixed and steadfast. The inner-eye looketh within and beholdeth the Vision of Glory. The Blessed Vision the Master enjoyeth for a while. His face shineth with a heavenly lustre and at last breaketh into smiles.

"Half returning to the plane of consciousness, He sayeth, 'Yes, my Holy Mother is none other than the Absolute (Brahman of the Vedanta). She it is to whom the six systems of philosophy with all the learned disquisitions that are in them furnish no clue. The differentiated ego, being taken away by my Mother, there cometh the realization of the Impersonal in Samadhi and then it is the Impersonal God—not the individual soul—that realizeth the Impersonal. With the ego purified and as such retained, the seeing or realization of the Personal God or any of her manifestations is possible by Her Grace, manifestations, such as Sri Krishna, Chaitanya Deva and other Divine Incarnations, etc., etc., manifestations as men, women, children, all living creatures; nay, all the twenty-four categories.

"It pleaseth my mother, the Personal God, to efface the self in self-less Samadhi. The result is the realization of the Impersonal God in Samadhi.

"Sometimes it pleaseth Her to keep that self on in Her devotees and then to appear before them (as a Personal God) and talk to them.

"The key to the realization of the Absolute is with the Divine Person alone, the *Saguna Brahma* of the *Upanishads*, the Personal God of devotees.

"The power of discrimination which the Philosopher relieth upon cometh from Her, my Divine Mother (the Personal God).

"On the other hand, prayer, meditation, devotion, self-surrender are all derived from my Omnipotent Mother.

"Again, the knowing one in Samadhi is sometimes kept on in that state and sometimes not. Who keepeth him on in that blessed state? Who bringeth him down to the lower plane of sense-consciousness? Why, it is the Divine Person, my Holy Mother.

"Such a Person cannot be unreal. She is the Personal side of the one Reality, the Absolute (Brahman of the Vedanta). Yes, my Mother has declared unto Her Children 'I am'; 'I am the Mother of the Universe,' 'I am the *Brahma* of the Vedanta' 'I am the *Atman of the Upanishads.'*

"Thus the Personal God revealeth Herself. Revelation is the proof of Her existence.

"Again the Impersonal Undifferentiated God, the Absolute, is *revealed* by the personal God, i.e., the Personal side of God the Absolute. The Saint in Samadhi cannot say anything about the Absolute. Like the salt-doll getting into touch with the Mighty Ocean he is lost! Nor can he, coming down from Samadhi, say anything about the Absolute. Once differentiated, he is mute as to the Undifferentiated. Once in the relative world his mouth is shut as to the Absolute and Unconditioned.

"My Mother (the Personal side of the Absolute) saith. 'I am the Absolute' (the *Nirguna Brahma* of the *Upanishads*).

"Thus too Revelation is the only proof of the Impersonal God.

"However one may describe the Absolute or the Impersonal, one must throw one's differentiated *ego* into the description. His Absolute is at least covered, so to speak, by this *ego*.

"Surely with our feeble powers of Rationalization

and Discrimination we cannot reach the Absolute. Hence, Revelation not Rationalization! Inspiration not Reason.

"The manifestation of the Personal God is often a Spiritual Form which is seen only by the purified human soul. In other words, these Forms are realized by the organs of Spiritual Vision, belonging to that Spiritual Body (Bhagabati Tanu) which is derived from the Lord.

"It is not everybody but the perfect Man alone that can see these Divine Forms through the grace of my Mother.

"Once Ramachandra (God Incarnate) said to his great devotee, 'My son, tell me in what relation thou regardest me, and how thou meditatest upon me.' The devotee replied, O Rama, at times when the conviction, I am the body, clingeth to me, I worship Thee as the one Undivided God; then I look upon myself as a part of Thee, a fragment, as it were, of Divinity! At other times I meditate upon Thee as my Divine Master, and think of myself as Thy servant. When, however, I am blessed, O Rama, with Knowledge of God, the Absolute, I see, I realize that *I am Thou* and *Thou art me*.

"The devotee meant that after Samadhi his 'I' was merged or lost in Rama; by which he meant the Undifferentiated Ego, God the Absolute and Unconditioned. This is Brahmajnan.

"Again, suppose there is an Infinite Expanse of Water —water above, water beneath, water in all directions. Portions of the water we may imagine get changed into ice by contact with cold and thus solidified. Again, suppose that the same ice is exposed to heat, then the solid ice is liquified. It is changed into water once more.

"The Absolute is the Infinite Expanse of Water. The portions of this water that are changed into ice are the Spiritual Personal Forms of the Deity manifest to devotees. The cold is the Bhakti of the devotee, his love,

his devotion, his self-surrender. The heat again is discrimination between the Real (i.e., God the Absolute) and the Unreal or Phenomenal universe, leading up to selfless Samadhi, and the total effacement of the self which saith 'I,' 'I.' "

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(From Gospel P-326)

"Doctor: Thou seest, Sir, man hath his progress stopped in the path of Devotion unaided by Reasoning.

"Master: His course, indeed, is stopped, were you to carry the metaphor further on. But surely his progress is not stopped. The ice under different forms is the Lord Himself manifesting to the devotee under different Forms. He realizeth God none else. The Form that he seeth is the reading of God in *Samadhi* through the medium of *Bhakti*. If thou likest the path of Knowledge or Philosophy better thou mayest reason, 'The Absolute is the only Reality and the world with names and forms is unreal.' And thou mayest realize this in *Samadhi*. The ice under different forms, will then melt away under the powerful rays of the Sun of True Knowledge, leaving the Shoreless Unbounded Ocean for thee to realize!"

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(From Gospel P-325)

"Yes He is both *with* Form and *without* Form, as thou sayest. Just think of a shoreless ocean. When it is very cold, the water near the surface changes into ice. And the ice taketh different forms in different places. But when the sun is up and shineth upon the ice, it melteth away.

"The Shoreless Ocean is God. The intense cold is the soft, cooling influence of Devotion or the Love of God. The Ice appearing under different forms is God, manifesting Himself, as it were, to the devotees under the

cooling influence of His deep devotion. The melting away of the ice under different forms is the disappearance of the Spiritual Forms (in which the Lord manifesteth Himself) under the burning rays of the Sun of Knowledge Absolute realized in *Samadhi*.

"Doctor: When the sun is up, the ice indeed melteth. And what is more, the water changeth into invisible vapor. This we know from science. Dost thou not think, Sir, this will carry the analogy a little higher?

"Master: The meaning of the analogy is that reasoning as to the real and the unreal, we come to the conclusion that God the Absolute is Real and the phenomenal universe is unreal. The latter includeth all things that have name or form—material or spiritual. This is the conclusion of Vedanta Philosophy. Reasoning on this line and realizing in the *Samadhi* which followeth, the Knowing One saith, 'God is not a Person' for that would be limiting God. Nothing can be predicated of God the Absolute. The conditioned self is effaced in Samadhi. Thus there remaineth nobody to predicate about the Absolute.

"Hence, Bhakti (the devotional feelings) is like the cooling light of the moon. Absolute Knowledge is like the sun with its burning rays. It is said that in the extreme north and in the extreme south there are seas where water changeth into masses of ice which stop the course of ships."

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(From Gospel P-135-136)

"Saith he, 'Oh Mother! why hast Thou brought me here? They are hedged round and are not free! It is indeed possible for me to save them out of their prison-house?'

"Is it that the Master looks upon men of the world as beings who are shut up within a prison-house (Samsar); who cannot get out into the free air of

God-consciousness; who cannot so much as see the Light Divine; who, in short, are bound hand and foot by affairs of the world? Men of the world can indeed see only the things within their prison-house—pleasures of the senses and worldly things. Is it thus that he saith to the Divine Mother, Why hast Thou brought me here?"

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(From Gospel P-137)

"Not even now hath the Master got back the power of speech. His heart is full; He cannot speak. He only smileth on the good man who talketh of the Baba.

"Brahmo (to the Master): Sir, Powhari Baba hath got Thy photograph too, which he hath put up in his own room.

"The Master smileth again and pointed to his own body with his finger. At last in a subdued tone He saith, 'A pillow-case! It is nothing but a pillow-case.'

"The pillow and the pillow-case! The Soul and the Body! Doth the Master say that the body alone dieth and the Soul dieth not, that the photograph is of the body which will not last for ever? Does he for this reason say, 'Let us not set a very high value on a photograph which is of the body, but rather worship Him who is the Ruler of the Soul within?' "

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(From Gospel P-362-364)

"Doctor (to Sri Ramakrishna): Well, Sir, may I say that it is not good that you allow people during *Samadhi* to touch Your feet with their body?

"Sri Ramakrishna: Surely thou dost not say that I am conscious of this.

"Doctor: You feel that that is not a right thing to do, don't You?

"Sri Ramakrishna: What shall I say regards the state of my mind during *Samadhi*? After the Samadhi is

over I sometimes go so far as to ask myself, may this not be the cause of the disease that I have got? The thing is, the thought of God maketh me mad. All this is the result of madness. There is no help for it.

"Doctor (to the disciples): He expresses regret for what He does. He feels that the act is sinful.

"Sri Ramakrishna (to Vivekananda): Well, thou hast great penetration. Do explain it all to him.

"Girish (to Doctor): Sir, you are quite mistaken. He is by no means sorry that His feet touch the persons of the *devotees*. No, it is not that. His body is pure, sinless; purity itself. He is good enough, in His anxiety for their spiritual welfare, to allow His hallowed feet to touch the body of the *devotees*. As a result of His taking their sins upon Himself, His own body, He sometimes thinks, he may be suffering from disease. You may think of your own case. You were once taken ill with colic, as you once told us, as the result of hard study. Well, did not you at that time express your regret that you had sat up reading till very late hours at night? Does that prove that reading till late hours at night is bad? The Master may be sorry from the point of view of a patient. He is by no means sorry from the point of view of a Teacher from God anxious for the welfare of humanity.

"The Doctor was rather put out of countenance and hung his head.

"Doctor (to Girish): I confess that I am beaten. Now give me the dust of your feet.

"(To Vivekananda): This matter apart, I must admit the acuteness of his (Girish's) intellectual powers.

"Vivekananda (to Doctor): You may view the question another way. You sometimes devote your life to the task of making a scientific discovery—and then you do not look to your body, your health, and so forth. Now, the knowledge of God is the grandest of all sciences; is it not natural that the Master has risked

His health for this purpose, and, may be, has ruined it?

"Doctor: Religious reformers without a single exception—Buddha, Jesus, Chaitanya, Muhammad—all were at the end filled with egotism. They all declare, 'what I say—that alone—is absolutely correct; nothing else!' How shocking!

"With this the Doctor stood up to depart.

"Girish (to the Doctor): Sir, don't you think you are running into the same error? You point out they were egotists all—all of them, without exception, egotists! You find fault with them, and, don't you think, the same charge may be laid at your door?

"The Doctor was silent.

"Vivekananda: We offer to Him worship *bordering* on divine worship."

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(From Gospel P-306-308)

"Going downstairs from the first floor He hath become like another being. He looketh as if he were lost in the thought of God; He looketh as if He has drunk deep! He is followed by His disciples Narayan and M. A little behind come Ram, Chuni and others.

"Yes, lost! It seems as if sense-consciousness were beginning to leave Him. Narayan comes forward to hold Him by the hand lest He misses His footing. The Master seems annoyed.

"A short while and He sayeth to Narayan with great tenderness, 'If Thou holdest me by the hand people will say, he is a drunkard; let me walk on without any help.'

"He crosseth the next turning at Bosepara just a little way from Girish's house. What is it that maketh Him walk so fast? The disciples are left behind! No one knoweth what Divine Idea hath found its way into His heart.

"What is it that maketh Him walk like a mad man?

It is because He is thinking of that Being Who in the Vedanta is said to be beyond the reach of word and thought? Just a little while ago at Balaram's house He declared that the Being is *not* beyond the reach of the Purified Supersensual Mind; that He may indeed be *realized* by the Pure Mind, which is the same thing as the Pure Reason—which is the same thing as the Pure Soul! Or it may be that He is just at the present moment beholding that Being as a Reality!

"Is this realizing 'Whatever is, is God?'

"Ah, here is Narendra coming! Many a day hath the Master cried, saying, 'Narendra, Narendra, Narendra,' like one gone mad! But now Narendra is here before Him and yet He exchangeth no word with him! Is this what people call *Bhava* (God Consciousness)—a state into which Gauranga (Chaitanya) is said to have been constantly thrown? Who is there to look through the mystery of God-consciousness?

"He hath come up to the end of the lane leading to Girish's house. The disciples all walk after Him.

"Now He will speak to Narendra. Sayeth He, 'Is it well with thee, my child? I had not till now the power to talk to thee.' Every word that falleth from His lips is marked with tenderness.

"He hath not as yet come up to the door of the house. All at once He stoppeth. He looketh at Narendra and sayeth 'One word—this is one of the two (the human soul?) and that is another (Cosmos?)'

"Was He indeed looking on the soul and the world? If so, in what light? He was looking on speechless!

"One or two words have dropped from His hallowed lips—like some solemn texts from the Inspired Scriptures, the *Vedas*—like unto the blessed Word of God!

"Or was it as if one had gone to the Shore of the Infinite Ocean and stood up there speechless, looking on the Boundless Expanse, and had heard one or two echoes from the Never-ceasing Voice that cometh up from the Eternal Deep?"

SEED THOUGHTS

Samadhi Is Concordance of Time and Space

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Samadhi Is A Fusion of Time and Space

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Samadhi Is Enjoying The Presence Of: The Deity
The Incarnation
The Purushottama

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Samadhi Is The Point Between Knowing And Beyond Knowing

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Samadhi Is The Eternal Springboard

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Samadhi Is The Self-Imposed Pause In The Cosmic Show

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Samadhi Is The Supra-conscious State of Awareness

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Samadhi Presupposes The Conscious Awareness of Divinity In Form Or Without Form

CHAPTER 11

THE SPECIAL MESSAGE OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

Probably it requires a note of explanation as to why the writer has so many times referred to—and fallen back on—the life and message of Sri Ramakrishna as a final clue to the Cosmic evolution in this era, as well as in the era that is to come; he can only say that all that is written herein came from his own experiences in spiritual life.

Thirty-three years ago, I was introduced to Sri Ramakrishna's philosophy and under my beloved teacher-as-Guru, the late Gour Govinda Gupta, I took some inspiration from Sri Ramakrishna's life even though at that time it didn't appeal to me much. It may be noted that this said beloved teacher was himself an initiated disciple of the Holy Mother (consort of Sri Ramakrishna); he was the son of Sri Manindra, an intimate disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

Anyway, as a young man of those days, I was practicing meditation partly in Tantra, and partly in the Patanjal Yoga system. Since in those college years my mind was bent toward knowledge, I naturally didn't pay much value to this message of Sri Ramakrishna. Noting this, my beloved Guru said: "A day will come

when—in the maturity of your thought and spiritual life—you will have to fall back on and accept Sri Ramakrishna's message as the latest and highest ideal to be achieved in this world today."

Thereafter for thirty-three years I came in contact with innumerable saints and scholars who shared the fruits of their achievement with me. To this knowledge I added the fruits of my own study of philosophy and religion, in and out of the university to whatever had been gained in my own spiritual practices; after thirty-three years, I have been forced to be convinced that Sri Ramakrishna's philosophy, His message, His practical illustrations and His life give the latest and most novel refuge to mankind.

Once my spiritual life had come to a state of maturity—as prophesized by my beloved Guru—I was drawn back to Sri Ramakrishna as the only Source who could help me with my physical burdens as well as take me on to new spiritual heights. I therefore made a search to find my Guruji, whom I had lost touch with but never forgotten.

After much difficulty, I followed a clue to a town 600 miles distant; I contacted my Guru by letter, and his letter came from the house of a relative, not too distant from my own village. There I achieved reunion with my beloved Guru.

On first sight, Guruji said: "Oh, it is you who have been calling me. I have kept my human frame until you could have your desire fulfilled to see me again." Before many days had passed—but not until the Guru had bestowed further spiritual blessings on his rebellious devotee—he left his mortal frame.

It is perfectly evident that during all the intervening years, the Guruji had never lost spiritual contact with his devotee, and continuing inspiration and instruction was always there.

The author feels that only in taking refuge in Sri Ramakrishna's message can man solve the present evolutionary crisis of human and worldly and spiritual

life. I have realized both practical and spiritual benefit since this realization has come to me. I am also convinced that the physical form of Sri Ramakrishna has not dissolved into the Cosmic sea, and that He will come—and does—whenever a crying soul needs His help for succor, not only in the spiritual field but in worldly tribulations as well.

The readers themselves will be the best judge of the above truth. If anyone puts a constant suggestion to his or her mind, to translate His message into their practical life, surely He will come to them also.

I have been hinting all along that there is something new for the man of today. In the rich heritage left to us by Sri Ramakrishna we find a vision which not only fulfills the goal set out by the ancient scriptures, but also gives man a new goal to achieve.

Sri Ramakrishna was not content to simply tell that there was value in the ancient practices and the state which was achieved in their maturity; He Himself practiced these disciplines until the fruits came out and He knew what was what. But He did not stop here. He went on to new horizons to show man the next Ideal to be achieved.

Sri Ramakrishna often said that all things are of God, and all religions and practices are true. There is, however, a hierarchy and man—to achieve his goal—will fashion a synthesis of all the spiritual practices and principles.

In this context it will be interesting to note that in the Yoga of the *Kathopanisad* there is manifest a hint of the stages of Samadhi (intense concentration wherein ego is lost) that shows some similarity to those we have already discussed in the chapter dealing with Koshas. In the third chapter of the *Kathopanisad,* verses 10 to 12, we may look for guidance and clarification of this view.

On the lowest rung of the ladder we find that there are the gross senses, then the subtle senses, then the material objects, then the mind, then the intellect (Buddhi), then

the Mahat (the Soul in its greatness) and the highest is the all pervasive, tranquil Cosmic soul. This points out the steps on the path that we are to take to reach this highest rung—in order to enjoy and to merge with the Cosmic Soul.

In verse 13, third chapter, we find expressed why we are to merge the speech inclusive of other sense organs like touch, sight, etc., into the mind—and then why the mind should be merged into the Buddhi or intellect—and then why the intellect should be merged into the great Self—and lastly, why this great Self is to be merged into the Universal Self of peace and joy (the Cosmic vast Soul of tranquillity). Here, clearly, it is shown how the aspirant is climbing from one rung to another on the spiritual ladder, what the ladder is, and how to achieve the goal.

When one stage or rung is attained there is a pause of attainment making the devotee eligible, qualified and ready to attain the next rung on the ladder. These pauses at the different stages—which are attained through concentration—are the respective steps in the stages in a hierarchy of Samadhis. It is also interesting to note that verse 11 explains that there is a higher state to be attained which is superior to the Atman in greatness.

Then comes the final word, where it says that Purusha (eternal conscious principle when regarded as Person) is superior to the unmanifested state, and that nothing is superior to Purusha. The ancient scriptures do not go any further, and this is the end which man can hope to achieve through them. This is the supreme goal which they present.

How far this unmanifested state is another name for Prakriti or Shakti and how far this Purusha is a counterpart of the self-same Purusha (Eternal Conscious Principle) which is the essence of the individual soul of the Samkhya, is too much to be discussed here. At least, there is some similarity.

But it says that nothing is superior to Purusha, mean-

ing thereby that in the realm of subtlety this Purusha, be it pure intelligence of the Samkhya or be it the Purushottama of the *Gita*, is placed on the highest rung of subtlety as a supreme state or being of realization.

Perhaps from that time until now the authors and comentators of the *Kathopanisad* and Samkhya and other seers with their particular views could project their vision only to the realization which was the highest expressed at that time. But since there is no end of God-realization, how can one put a roadblock in the path? We find, as we have found before and shall find hereafter, that the similar experiences and realizations —marked by the testimonials of many spiritual aspirants (whether from the Vedantic knowledge point of view, or from the Buddhist point of view or from the Tantrik Yoga point of view)—are expressed in different terminology, no doubt, but the experiences are the same according to where they are on the ladder.

We are now suggesting that, as hinted in the last chapter of the *Gita*, there is a realization higher than envisioned by the great seers and Rishis of the old Vedantist school—as well as that envisioned by the writers and and supporters of the *Kathopanisad*. This new, more subtle view not only includes these angles of vision, but also adds to it the fusion of God in form and of God as the Absolute.

These two fuse to reveal the Purushottama and ultimately the Incarnation. To realize, to experience God in these dimensions, one experiences Samadhi from the angle of vision and experience of both the Vedantists and the Samkhyists—and to this experience is added the Samadhi of the Bhakta in its highest form, which reveals the Absolute, both form and formless, simultaneously.

Here we want to give again in brief Sri Ramakrishna's message which has been described, in part, in Chapter 3. Sri Ramakrishna told that both the gross world and Cosmic Conscious Energy are a reality. As long as the person views himself as the finite ego, the world is true.

When he experiences himself as spirit, the gross world is no longer a reality in the sense that it was before. It is the Samskaras (predispositions and memory patterns) and desires that hold the ego to the gross world. He agreed with all the schools in that from their particular angle of view their point was true; but He cautioned that there is always a new and higher truth, a new and higher goal to achieve.

To see this goal Beyond, He told that all the prophets throughout the ages—and their messages—should be considered. Each religious practice has its own value, but there is a hierarchy of reality; He did not discount any person's view or any revelation. He simply showed how each in its own context was true. But one thing He continually said: there is no end to God-realization. There is no end to the Cosmic Play. Whenever any school, for example the Vedantists, say that this is the end, Sri Ramakrishna said: "No. To perceive an end is to say there is automatically something beyond that end."

Just see how skillfully He never discredited a theory. Instead He gave it a new meaning in its proper place in the Cosmic show. He does not say that others are wrong. He says that this is true at that time, but now—in the present time—we must see where it fits. All the ancient schools of thought and religions have their proper place, but they should be explained in the context of the whole.

They each have their point and their part in the whole; this or that view is true only so long as it explains a certain facet of the phenomena. Perhaps one idea or practice satisfied humanity at one stage, but today it can satisfy only a small portion of humanity in this age. When the messages of all the prophets and all the tenets of all the religions are accepted in their context, there is a firm and reliable foundation for a broad view of the whole Cosmic Show. This is how the man of today can have a more realistic and comprehensive view of the universe.

All religions have a meaning in relation to their place and time in history, and this will be found as we move further into our relationship with Divinity; then we can see

how everything fits into the Cosmic Show. Sri Ramakrishna said over and over again: "What any man has realized should be accepted as true. All the experiences of the Incarnations, the prophets, the sages, the saints, the seers from the beginning of time until this day have their meaning and value."

You won't get this kind of philosophy in any form from any Yogic process, from Advaita Vedanta, from Vedanta, from the *Gita*, from Patanjali, from Buddhism or Christianity or from any source until the time of Sri Ramakrishna. What Sri Ramakrishna has told is the new and highest goal for humanity for this age.

The Vedantist and Buddhists say: "Merge into Infinity—that is the final goal." The Vaisnavas say: "Let duality persist in its present way forever so we can enjoy it. That's all." Sri Ramakrishna makes a beautiful combination of these two extremes to project a higher value. Very few people have noted or understood the importance of this view.

This author has searched here and there, all over the world, in vain effort to find some one who will tell these things; this dramatic and profound truth came from a little uneducated Priest at Dakshineswar, who was relatively little known during His lifetime. It is Sri Ramakrishna who has found a new light in the ancient scriptures when viewed as a whole.

What is the value of this view? It is this: man can now appreciate how the *whole* world has a meaning, a purpose. Otherwise, it can be viewed as blind atoms fighting each other and eventually and accidentally coming together in such a way as to eventually shape the human form. Even logically this should not be considered as true.

That the happenings of the world are not blind is appreciated when a sixth Principle is considered. The sun does not collide with the moon; the moon does not collide with the earth; the earth does not collide with the stars. Everything has its own aspect and sphere in the universe. There is an inherent principle permeating all the

objects in the world. This principle which sustains the Cosmic Play is called *Dharma* in Indian scriptures.

The next question follows naturally: why does this principle work, or for what does it work? As we can read in the *Upanishads*, God in the beginning (if there really is a beginning) wanted to enjoy Himself.

This enjoyment of Himself is called *Play* or *Lila*; now if there is no duality, there cannot be The Play. If a child plays before a mirror, two things are needed for the play. There must be the play and the one to enjoy the play. So when the Cosmic Energy, after passing through the evolutionary stages in various forms, comes to a human being, it has come to the highest enjoyment yet known on this planet. The mind at this stage has developed the ability to know Itself as soul.

If the human being wants to lose himself in Nirvikalpa Samadhi (a Samadhi wherein the functions of the body stop) and dilute himself into Infinity, the Play is over. But ending the Play to make the Play over is not the Cosmic Play.

The Play must go on. In Nirvikalpa Samadhi, the first thing that comes is the realization that *I am He*. The individual ego is gone. Then the devotee realizes *He is I*. In other words, the moment he dissolves his little ego into the Cosmic Sea, he thinks that he loses the ego which he has brought through several millions of incarnations. Sri Ramakrishna tells us that God says: "No! Go a step further and discover that you don't lose your ego. You will discover that My ego is *your* ego."

It is a matter of a new consciousness only. God as a Divine Ego wants to play on and on with Himself in an ever new and more beautiful and more subtle way; so when the Lord has replaced the devotee's ego with His own, He again projects Himself out to play. The reality is that God, who chooses to forget who He is to Play as the human being, now is ready to play the game of knowing Himself again. When in Samadhi the self, who has so long been known as 'X,' 'Y,' or 'Z,' is lost, it is as if the Lord says: "Like a lump of sugar, I dissolve this human

ego into the ocean. Immediately and simultaneously from the ocean I give back a new Divine Ego to play in form again.

The new form is very similar to the old form, but there is a subtle difference; the resurrected body of the Christ gives us the clue. In this new luminous form the play goes on. Radha, who had not yet realized Nitya (the eternal) played as a finite ego with Krishna. She was a loving devotee, no doubt, but her love was not eternal. There was still a feeling of separation and as the ego was not yet fully matured, it lost its identity in Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

Sri Ramakrishna hints that if such a devotee has courage enough to sail deeper into the unknown waters and become Nitya (eternal), then God takes charge as a Divine ego in that form. To put it in other words, God Himself at that time remembers who He is. Then the devotee discovers a truth that was always there. He now knows that he is Nitya (eternal) and has always been and from a more subtle angle of vision, the Cosmic Show begins anew to develop new values.

The show again begins anew. The new play on Nitya Radha, the eternal love Play of Divinity goes into a new dance of joy. So, by the alchemic touch *I-am-He* consciousness becomes the *He-is-I* as the Supreme Being reflects Himself in the form of the Devotee. Simultaneously, when He takes this form He wants to continue to love and to play on as a Divine individual.

How does God love? The answer comes from the scientific world: action and reaction—one kind of force in the form of energy acting in two ways. God loves through His law of attraction. He, in His Divine form stands, so to say, in His own station all alone. He in His multitude of finite forms stands each in his own individual station. Both want to attract the other.

We find these forces acting in the atom where the protons, electrons, etc., are moving about the nucleus; we find the same principle involved when the sun attracts the

planets. Simultaneously, the protons, electrons, neutrons and the planets somehow resist this attracting force and do not allow themselves to be pulled out of their orbit.

These two forces are known in science as centrifugal and centripetal, i.e., the negative and the positive, the attraction and the repulsion, gravitation and degravitation.

In short, the Cosmic Energy divides itself into two actions in order to enjoy the Divine Play. One force tries to move in evolution out from the center and the other force in involution tries to draw all back to the center. The evolutionary force is constantly moving out through the multitude of forms in the material gross world while the other force is constantly pulling everything back to Itself.

In what man calls the beginning of creation, the force of evolution is stronger but later when the turning back force is stronger, we call it involution. These two forces are constantly chasing each other, longing to be mixed up again and again. They pull and push in this constant mixing, sometimes one pulling harder and sometimes the other. Through this play forms come and go. This chasing each other to catch the other is the play of love that is going on simultaneously everywhere.

When they completely merge together, there is a quiescent joyful state which we call Samadhi; it is as if the lovers meet in a Divine embrace. When they view themselves as separate, chasing each other, then there is the play of two lovers acting through the forces of centrifugal and centripetal action. As the centripetal force He views Himself as God; in His centrifugal force He views Himself as the finite soul and to this finite soul He gives the power to forget His own indentity.

When these two forces are viewed in their totality, exclusive of their action either as a centrifugal or a centripetal force, man calls It *The Absolute*.

The ideal to be achieved is to view the whole show in *all* of its aspects. It is as if God in His Totality says: "I am One; let me be many. Let Me divide Myself in two

actions. In one force I shall draw all to Myself and in the other force I shall resist. In one force I shall remain stationary and you as the other part of Myself please follow Me. As the other force in the finite form I shall resist." God is saying that He shall forget that He is one and shall joyfully seek union between His two parts.

This chasing of the Supreme Soul after the finite soul and the finite soul after the Supreme Soul is called love. It is simply the urge to be united through the bond of attraction. This is The Religion. This is Dharma. This is the inherent force and motivation in all nature. This is the condition of the Divine Play. This is the constitution of the Divine Play not only of the human soul to the Infinite Beloved but it is also the play of atom to atom, molecule to molecule, proton to proton etc. This is the Cosmic nature.

We, being a part of this nature cannot resist the play of love. To *know* this play is to be religious. To *be* in it is to be more religious but to *enjoy* it is to be most religious.

The first stage from this angle of vision is through Jnana—to know. The second stage is through Raja Yoga, to merge into the play through the medium of the body functions or through Karma Yoga, to merge into the Cosmic Play through complete surrender in loving service to Divinity.

But the best of all is to enjoy the play. It is in Bhakti that the finite soul discovers the *why* of the play. This *why* is answered in the science of atomic principle—two forces chasing after each other, *lovemaking*. The *I* of the finite soul cannot help but love God.

Every cell in the universe is playing this game of love. In this realization we can say: "I cannot help loving God, it is inherent in my nature. He cannot help loving me. He has created me for the purpose of love."

To know and to enjoy this play as the reality and to participate *consciously* in this eternal game of love—this is Nitya Radha. This is the clue to the Divine Intercourse

that will one day be known in its fullness by the future spiritual man. Sri Ramakrishna has given the hint: "*Go beyond Samadhi! Play in Nitya Radha!*" No wonder He danced so much in the joy of Divine Bliss.

The world cannot go on for three billion years, then suddenly come to a standstill; how stupid is such a conception! When energy starts in motion it can never come to an end; it must go on and on. Even in modern science it has been determined that energy is never destroyed.

If energy is constantly moving, this energy does not and cannot stop; it can and does take new form constantly. It can be transformed into another form or can go into a new motion, but cannot stop. Accepting this principle we can see the deficiency in the Samkhya Yoga system, and their view of the Soul. They say that the soul itself can be finished, and then it is all over. The Vedandists say that when Nirvikalpa Samadhi (a state wherein all body functions are suspended) is achieved, the body will have to die after twenty-one days of continuing in this stage, and all that can be has been achieved.

Since the human body cannot sustain itself in suspended animation for a longer period, they come to the conclusion that this is the end. After death they say there is no longer a body, nor does the soul take any rebirth. All that was is dissolved into the Cosmic Sea and all the past of the individual soul will simply vanish.

Some Buddhists agree in the main with this philosophy, while others say that the being, in a state of Buddhahood, remains for all time. These schools also say that perfect meditation (intense concentration) leads to Samadhi and Samadhi leads to Nirvana or God-experience or Satori or Nirvikalpa Samadhi—which is absolute quietness, absolute peace, absolute voidness, full of joy.

This is the dissolution of the soul. All is absorbed back into Infinity to have neither shape nor any action ever again; the Buddhists say that after Nirvana there is a

cessation of birth and death and misery. Then comes Buddhahood. But what next?

Christianity is even more vague. They say that the soul goes to heaven to live eternally with God. But what happens in this eternal stage no one can tell.

Our viewpoint is this: a dive deeper into Infinity will reveal something more. Again we ask the sages of the past: "Do you think all this vast infinite universe is a joke, created for nothing?" In this respect many things are said in the various schools about Samadhi. Some say that Samadhi leads to liberation. Others say that Samadhi leads to separation from Prakriti or that Samadhi leads to Nirvana (Intense concentration when *I-ness* goes). Some say that Samadhi leads to God-realization.

The Samkhya School says that the final goal is the Realization that the Soul is not mixed up with Prakriti (nature); they say that Purusha (the individual soul) is to be separated from Prakriti (Nature). The Buddhist will say that I am ego-consciousness which wrongly has involved itself in suffering due to desires. They say that the moment all desires go, Samadhi (intense concentration) comes. After Samadhi the Buddhists come to Nirvana through Nirodha. Other schools call this state God-realization. Then they all say that everything is finished. What then? They cannot say. They keep mum.

But this author hears Sri Ramakrishna say there is something more. There is no end to the world and the Divine Play. If you say there is, this presupposes that there's something beyond the end. If you say that you know this is the end of the table, then you must have an idea of what is beyond this table.

Otherwise, you could have no knowledge of the end of the table. The moment it is said that this is the end goal of meditation, or any other spiritual practice, it is implied that something is beyond. Unless you have a glimpse of or at least see a shadow of the thought of something as different, beyond, you cannot say this is the end of the table.

If you accept the position that you cannot have the

end of a thing without in some way or other going beyond it, then you come to the author's fold. Again, let us say: "There is no end to the Cosmic Play. Why don't you join us and be brave enough and rational enough to say that? Why don't you confess it and joyfully accept it?"

When the Buddhists or Samkhyists show a goal that is the end of the Cosmic show, they, too, without realizing it, must have a vision of something that is beyond that end. This might be very vague or dim, and may even be resting in the subconscious; if we cannot now say that there is an end without implying that something is beyond the end, then we have to say that there is no end to God-experience at least as far as human perception goes. Perhaps Buddhists and Samkhyists would hesitate to say this because it would disturb their philosophy.

Sri Aurobindo says that there is a new era to come and God will descend to merge with human life. He says that this era will come with the descent of God and the ascent of humanity to merge at a meeting point. Then human life will be converted into Divine life. After that, what? What next?

Then this world becomes Divine and nothing more is projected; but even this Divinized world cannot be the end, according to Sri Ramakrishna. When there is no enmity, no hate, no jealousy, no suffering from bodily pains, no death, nothing of the kind, and everything is perfect—is there nothing more to achieve?

Is there nothing more or new to come? Will the whole world stop its motion? Sri Ramakrishna says: "No. So far as our vision goes now this may be what we call the end. Beyond that there is always something else, because there is no end to Divine action."

To summarize Sri Ramakrishna's contribution to the man of today—there is something new. Sri Aurobindo has given us the first glimpse. He has given a more practical shape to what the Rishis gave ages ago in a theoretical sense. The concept of a Divinized mind motivating man was in Vaisnavite philosophy, in some form or other, even in ancient times.

However, this descent of Divinity and ascent of humanity was not put in practical terms before Sri Aurobindo. The way to achieve, he says, is simply to open yourself to Divine Grace. With aspiration Divine Grace will fall to change your cells. This promise is already there in scriptures in some form or other in various ways.

But Sri Aurobindo said it more clearly and more practically for the man of this century. He has developed this concept in a philosophical way and this is why it is difficult for the layman to follow. Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is an important contribution to humanity. He has more clearly stated at least in some respects what has been said before and then added his own originality.

How to follow and achieve the goal of merging with Divinity, that is the difficulty. Without showing any disrespect to communities and organizations, this author humbly says that at best they have their limitations. It is very difficult for the intimate experience of God-realization to be made in a public meeting place. If realization is to be an intimate play between the two beloveds, the finite and the Infinite, it will not be played in public.

As any spiritual or religious organization grows, more and more attention has to be put on the organizational difficulties: how to pay bills, how to print the books, how to spread the message, how to feed the members, etc. Then the members gradually become socially and institutionally crazy. The ideal of experiencing God dissolves into the ideal of mixing pleasantly with their fellow man and giving him their own special message.

People are seen going to the church or temple for worship with the avowed purpose of becoming more spiritual. But if they search their minds they may find that sometimes they go mostly to mix socially and to talk of their work or their dinner parties perhaps. As soon as the service is over the thought of God vanishes; I have been to many of these and after the services few talk about God.

One hears the following: "What is the matter with

that person? Why isn't he here today?" "Where is your new house?" "Who is the new member?" "What is the collection today?"

All are worldly things, important perhaps on the social level but unimportant for the experience of Samadhi (an intimate experience in Divinity). So, in a public way, God-realization is very difficult. That is why this author says that religious institutions generally do not give help for those who seek the higher intimate spiritual experience in *Samadhi*.

However, institutions have their place in the Cosmic Play. Institutions are to serve the physical and social needs to give the impetus and first stage in the spiritual needs of the aspirant to help him prepare for a higher spiritual life.

Although Sri Aurobindo's contribution is great, His view does not go as deep as Sri Ramakrishna's; this author is much fascinated with this gentleman, Sri Ramakrishna who to some may seem to be only a simple village priest. Only with much difficulty could He sign His name. He did not pass even the first stage of school. But as a descent of Divinity (the Incarnation of this age) He spoke something which the highest intellectuals of that day and this have not understood.

He demonstrated the fruits of practices of many spiritual schools including Tantra, Jnana, Christian and Muslim. Even the Pundits of today say it will take at least one hundred more years to grasp the truths He has given.

The more I ponder on His message, the more I am moved; anyway, this humble author has troubled himself to practice the disciplines of the various schools including the Samkhya Yoga system and Bhakti. I have also sought out the Pundits of many other schools; now I know that Sri Ramakrishna spoke a new truth.

Among the differences there is much similarity to be found in the goals and in the practices of all the schools. For example, according to the Jnanis, Samadhi (intense concentration wherein the *I-ness* goes) is not the real goal. It is a tool which leads to some higher end. The

Bhaktas experience intense moods of concentration without giving these much attention. Their goal is union with Divinity which they say is the highest Samadhi.

I met also with Sri Gopinath Kabiraj, in Benaras, to learn the Vedantist point of view. They say that after Samadhi there is Prajna. This is a sphere or plane of super wisdom (knowledge wherein you realize that you are soul). Then the aspirant crosses the barrier of death and birth and becomes unified with the same Supreme Being who is the Real Guru. This is the end.

When realizing that Samadhi leads to a place of supra-consciousness, a realization comes which leads to liberation in some form or other. In other words, the salt doll returns to the ocean. Now, Sri Ramakrishna says that all of these views are true and we have tried to express this message throughout this book. But He says something more. If we accept only these views, the Divine Play becomes a sham.

If returning this salt doll to the ocean is the only goal, what is the whole motive for creation? Is all the struggle and the pain and suffering just to take the salt doll back? Where is the place of creation? To make the doll, and then to break it again, serves no purpose at all. Is this view not a derogatory concept to assign to the Divinity who is known as bliss and joy? On a certain day will He find Himself with no doll? But if we accept the view of the Bhakta—that play with Divinity has no other destiny except a joy and bliss that takes us neither here nor there, would this not get boring?

Will the Divine Beloved sit some day with no work, and the idea of what He has done be melted away in bliss and joy? Sri Ramakrishna tells us: "No. Every moment is a starting point of a new dimension. Each experience of Samadhi is only a particular step on the ladder of eternity." No other person in the world has said that this is the eternal play.

In order to add the full import to the message of Sri Ramakrishna, the author feels constrained to tell briefly something of the life of this latest Divine Incarnation. The

story begins before He took birth as Gadadhara in a little village of West Bengal known as Kamarpukur.

One day Sri Ramakrishna was in a very high state of Samadhi. When he returned to normalcy, he told the following story to his disciples. He had seen a region somewhere beyond this planet, millions and trillions of miles away, where some few blessed souls were sitting in a high meditative state. It was a misty atmosphere of purple-red color and not at all like the atmosphere here on our planet Earth.

Slowly out of this Cosmic atmosphere something began to condense, and gradually out of the whirling mist he saw the form of a little child walking in a playful manner. The child smiled in a jovial way and strolled from one to another of the meditating souls. Finally, he came to one and stopped to caress him on the cheek and requested that he come down from his Samadhi; but the meditative soul paid no heed.

After much imploring and loving insistence by the child, the saint in meditation finally opened his eyes. The child then told the saint: "Now I have taken my form and am going to Mother Earth to play my role as the latest Incarnation. There is need to give a new impetus to humanity so that they can push onward to a new life. I'm going now. Please follow me soon."

Sri Ramakrishna saw in this vision that the child was himself, who took birth a short time after the above incident. The meditative saint was Vivekananda, who took his human birth several years thereafter in Calcutta, India. Sri Ramakrishna waited day after day at Dakshineswar for Vivekananda and could not rest until he came to him and they could start their spiritual play together.

There remains still the unsolved mystery as to why Vivekananda—a Jnani and a Vedantist—was chosen as the chief disciple to spread the message of Sri Ramakrishna both in India and abroad and how it was the Bhaktas, not the Sannyasin who were the ones to record his message. We have already told how Vivekananda was

purposefully brought by Sri Ramakrishna to birth, although the former was already enjoying the peaceful bliss of meditation that had taken him far beyond nature's pull where he was reluctant to be disturbed.

But there is more to this story. In his youth, Vivekananda—known then as Narendra—roamed about asking the Saints and Pundits (learned men): "Have you seen God?" Only when he came to Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar did he find a positive answer. From the beginning, Sri Ramakrishna bestowed a special kind of love and a special kind of attention on this skeptical young man. At their second meeting Sri Ramakrishna touched him on the chest and immediately Vivekananda fell into a Divine mood, wherein the worldly affairs dissolved. He cried out in pain: "What are you doing? What about my family? Bring me back to normalcy."

Two things are apparent here. First, Vivekananda was not meant to dissolve into the nothingness (or the everythingness) of the Cosmic Sea. Furthermore, his cells could not stand, at that time, the inrush of the spiritual energy. Later, however, Vivekananda asked Sri Ramakrishna over and over again for Samadhi, but Sri Ramakrishna told him always: "Go beyond Samadhi."

Vivekananda certainly played a very special and important part in the Divine Play with Sri Ramakrishna. His life and experiences must be viewed not only from the human point of view but they should also be appreciated as a message to others who seek the highest realization. It was not until the last part of his life that Vivekananda realized the full import of Sri Ramakrishna's teaching about Samadhi.

He told that even though Samadhi when experienced as a blissful state such as Nirvana, Satori, Sahaj Samadhi, etc., gives no doubt a benefit to the individual there is a higher purpose to be served. In a more mature state of Samadhi the realization comes that it is not experienced for the satisfaction of personal goals, however lofty they might be; it is for the benefit of the Cosmic Play in its totality.

In all high states of Samadhi, the devotee comes to appreciate that God not only constantly helps us with our worldy desires, but also supplies whatever we need in spiritual life—including the higher and higher stages of realization. This is the meaning of grace. Nothing is gained without this grace. God gives all needful things from time to time including Samadhi.

To put it even more plainly, it is not the effort of the devotee which brings Samadhi, but it is God himself who gives all things. In the *Bible* it tells that Jesus said that worldly personal things—including payment for work in the field—are given by God, not earned. So also, we do not earn Samadhi in any form. It is given by Divine grace. Human power is so finite, limited, frail and inadequate—and the experience of Samadhi is so high—that man in his human capability can never earn the right to this experience, however much he practices or meditates or performs Japa or tries in any other way to pursue the spiritual goal.

Meditation, chanting, Japa and devotional practices are merely the human effort to seek Divine Grace. They certainly have their value in turning the heart to God; these efforts are the means of holding our cup right side up to catch God's grace which is eternally falling. Although we know that Samadhi and other spiritual experiences cannot be earned, still we do all these practices and should until one day, at the last moment these blessings are given. Sri Ramakrishna brought Vivekananda back to this planet to show him this fact and others.

The next point for Vivekananda to appreciate was that meditation is done not for the meditator, but for others. When Samadhi is attained, two factors arise. First, in the earlier stages, it is a tool for the achievement of some higher goal; in a further stage the realization comes that God is the Supreme or the All who has given these experiences and that the aspirant himself has not earned anything; in a still further stage the realization comes that meditation and Samadhi is for the whole Cosmos.

There is a still higher step. The revelation comes that Samadhi (the blissful co-mingling of the finite with the Infinite) is the Divine Process of creation; from this high state something new springs forth that the Divinized individual and the Totality want to achieve in partnership. Vivekananda took his birth, not only to realize these things himself, but to show all humanity that Samadhi should be transcended until the Divine Play becomes a conscious Nitya-Radha (eternal love play).

Even Vivekananda did not accept this highest ideal in the beginning. After Sri Ramakrishna left his earthly body, Vivekananda was still harboring the idea that Samadhi was meant for the individual attainment. Like any true teacher, Sri Ramakrishna had given him his freedom to go to any other Sadhus or Yogis for instruction even though it is well known that travelling from one faith to another serves no good purpose. At any rate, it is on record that Vivekananda went to Pawharibaba for initiation; Pawharibaba, one of the greatest Yogis of that time, was vested with such powers that many a time he invited hundreds of persons for a feast and out of nothing but the Cosmic Energy he manifested and distributed thousands of tasty dishes and thousands of pieces of clothing.

We learn from Vivekananda's own writing that he went for the purpose of achieving such powers through Raja Yoga. At first he was refused an audience by this great Yogi, but he pursued him until he was finally allowed an audience. After much discussion, he found that this Yogi really knew far less than what he had already learned from Sri Ramakrishna; he began to appreciate that thousands of possible miraculous manifestations can come, after practicing certain disciplines, and these manifestations arise according to the aptitude of the person—in an individual way which is suited to the particular constitution.

For example, some person, practicing physical exercises may develop his biceps; another may develop his triceps; and another may develop his chest muscles,

etc. Every individual can, in other words, develop a particular facet of his constitution if he faithfully and skillfully practices. So in the practice of meditation and in Raja Yoga in particular, some individuals develop clairvoyance, some clairaudience, some the power of materialization, some the power to cure the sick, etc., each according to his own constitution and desire and mode of practice.

But this achievement, however miraculous, is petty compared to the ultimate goal in spiritual life. Jesus Christ developed the power of healing, but his message to humanity of love, faith and resurrection was of far greater value. Many Yogis—even today—have developed miraculous powers, but as mysterious and exciting as these are, they contribute little toward achieving the goal of higher intrinsic values.

With the help of Sri Ramakrishna, Vivekananda came to realize this truth. One day, when he was preparing to go visit the saint, and was standing in his room in a thoughtful, contemplative mood, he suddenly saw Sri Ramakrishna, although this was two years after Sri Ramakrishna had left His human body.

His Guru's face bore a sad expression; although others—including Sri Ma—had seen Sri Ramakrishna in form even after his death, still Vivekananda brushed off what he saw, thinking it an hallucination, and proceeded to ask for more techniques of Yoga. On that day, although there was much talk, no further instruction was given. The next day, Sri Ramakrishna again made his appearance.

Again, Vivekananda ignored what he saw and went for further instruction. Again Pawharibaba gave no instruction. When, the third day, Sri Ramakrishna made his appearance, Vivekananda was finally convinced of his error; he then declared that he was not going to seek any initiation from any other Yogi. Sri Ramakrishna, he finally came to realize, had given him much more than these lesser values—even including the experience of

Samadhi. In fact, the records show that never again did he approach another teacher for any instruction

This event should be viewed from a special angle because Vivekananda, like Arjuna, was the intimate playmate of the Incarnation. If he had realized the highest truth of Sri Ramakrishna's message before going on his mission around the world, he would not have blown the trumpet for Vedanta. And who at that time would have understood anything higher? Even when He came back to India, he didn't lay much emphasis on the higher message of Sri Ramakrishna. Instead he emphasized the importance of service to others and the value of meditation which are both important prerequisites for pursuing the higher Ideals.

But until today the highest truth and the purest beauty of Sri Ramakrishna's message has been neglected; it is the cry of this humble author that now is the time to appreciate and explore this Ideal.

With all of these aspects in mind, we can sum up the new truth that Sri Ramakrishna has brought for this age. Again and again He said that in these modern days there would be little time to practice rigorous meditation—or Raja Yoga or Hatha Yoga or Jnana Yoga—in the pattern of the ancient scriptures. The body constitution of the man of this age is not so strong, and the demands of the modern way of life do not leave him carefree enough to plunge wholeheartedly into the intellectual, devotional or volitional paths, as set out by the ancient Rishis.

How can the devotee today go into seclusion to practice severe disciplines? He further pointed out that since the human nature consists of three factors, thinking, feeling and willing, all these three factors should be attended to in spiritual practices. Over and over again, he told that love and devotion were the easiest and best for this age, and even the Jnana Yogi and the Karma Yogi can reach His particular goal through the medium of the devotional path.

He dramatically told that if love and joy are absent

from the Cosmic show, the Cosmic evolution becomes meaningless; it is too much an error to say that God made only some intellectual gymnasium when He created this world, and that when a certain stage is reached this intellectual gymnasium dissolves, leaving no trace of the play.

He further said that it was an error to ignore either the mundane world or its spiritual counterpart. In a beautiful illustration, Sri Ramakrishna said that if you discard the skin of an orange in the beginning, not only would the inside of the fruit not get the proper chance to ripen, but also something of the total orange would be lost. The skin is necessary. So the mundane world itself is necessary for the growth and development of higher values.

The world should be viewed as a whole; no part should be discarded. Everything comes out of the beginning, especially higher values. He decried the Advaita Vedantist point of view that only the Absolute—God without form—is the reality. He explained that this was only one part of the truth; God in form is also true. To support both of these views, He said that each man's revelation should be considered true.

He gave very clear statements as to the value of the life of a Sannyasin and the life of a householder. The Sannyasins are the chosen few who set the ideal for the others; thus, they have to take extreme precaution to keep out of the clutch of Nature. But He held in very high esteem the householder.

First, the householder, unlike the mendicant in a Sannyasin order, has to discharge household and worldly responsibilities while at the same time seeking God-realization through various disciplines and practices. This makes the task of the householder more arduous and strenuous.

In the second place, a householder devotee has a shelter and a sense of security for his bodily needs. He does not have to give time and attention to find a place to sleep

and something to eat. Sri Ramakrishna compared the householder to the warrior who fights the battle from behind the walls of a fortress, while the Sannyasin fights entirely in an open field.

It is interesting to note that it is a householder who recorded the message of Sri Ramakrishna, word-for-word and matured these words within his own heart to emphasize the highest ideals of the Bhaktas.

This gives us a new scope for practice in this modern age. Sri Ramakrishna has given an Ideal and a Divine Plan for every man, whatever be his religious creed or nature. The discovery of the full meaning of His message is the certain way to the worldly peace and Divine Joy that the man of today is madly hankering after.

CHAPTER 12

THE DESTINY OF MAN

The reader must have noticed that we have endeavored to look at the conception of Samadhi from different angles to appreciate the various modes of practice. The claim by each school of thought is that Samadhi attained through its particular process is either the ultimate reality or the ultimate goal.

Taking all these views into consideration, it is evident that in the various schools, in some respect or other, this destiny of the soul seems to differ. The confusion somewhat disappears when we appreciate that each man is an individual, and that a man ultimately becomes what he sets out to be.

For example, when a Bhakta Yogi wants to play with the Divine Cosmic Player, and when he achieves such a state, how can this be the same as the Samkhya Yogi or the Buddhist who wants to lay more emphasis on the negative phase, i.e., to escape from the evils of death and birth. Also, the goal of an Advaita Vedantist of dissolving the finite self, by identifying the finite self with the Cosmic Self, can not play the same tune as that of a Bhakta Yogi.

If we want to cater to and respect all schools of thought, which we should, it must be appreciated that each has its

place in the destiny of the human soul. God is not a foolish or malevolent creator, who instills in the heart of the human being some ideal to attain as the goal of life only later to denounce this practice as an error. Every aspiration that exists in the human heart has its reality somewhere in the Cosmic Reality, in some respect or other. This truth holds good both in the field of religion and in the mundane aspirations of the human being.

Your attention has often been brought to the contribution of Sri Aurobindo, whom many claim as the exponent of the latest human thought in this respect. Though, in fact, most of the systems or schools of thought point vaguely to something beyond Samadhi, most if not all point only to *one* step beyond. Then they cry a halt and say that this is the end of the soul's journey.

Samkhya Yoga would say that following the experience of a Nirvikalpa type of Samadhi, the Yogi would pass on to a state which they call Samapatti. In this state they attain Divine wisdom and find their own resplendent nature as a soul which has returned to its original condition beyond the influence of Prakriti (Nature's laws). Then an even higher state comes which they term as the Kevala. It is a state of an undifferentiated and undefined consciousness.

At this stage a Buddhist passes into a state of Nirvana. Some Buddhists say this is the end, but the Tibetans say: "No, there is a state of Buddhahood to enjoy." An Advaita Vedantist says that the salt doll returns to the ocean and dissolves. But the Bhakta wants to play on and on with his Divine Beloved.

Where have we arrived from all the foregoing discussion? Looking at the hierarchy of spiritual values that has been fostered by the various schools of thought, we have come to the position where we can summarize the past achievements of man and have a glimpse of the future of our soul—and of the new world that will become its abode. This is the main object of our discourse.

We have already discussed what Samadhi is, who ex-

periences it, and how and why, but before we can go into the projection of the future it must be determined how Samadhi works in the Cosmic play. We cannot ignore that the play of the mind is the beginning point of Samadhi. From whatever angle we might look, it can be seen that the gateway of Samadhi—when conceived as the concentration and quiescence of mind—comes in either of two paths: first, the Yoga to stop the mental modifications, and second, the Yoga to transmute the mental modifications of mind (the mind substance and products of the mind) into a state of mental quiescence so that it either dissolves altogether or is relegated to its original source, namely the Self or Soul. Both of these two fundamental approaches are advanced by the Patanjalists and the Advaita Vedantists in some form or other.

The Buddhists have borrowed the same principle and adapted it to their philosophy. The Patanjal and Advaita schools take the stand that the soul is, after all, Soul or Purusha or Atman which is changeless. The only thing that can be said about Purusha in their view is that it is self-conscious existence, full of joy and bliss and shorn of extraneous influences. But either in the mental world or in the external world the soul definitely becomes a being of Ananda (Divine joy and bliss) if we call it in a positive manner.

If we describe this state which the soul seeks in a negative way, we say that it gets out of the clutch of Prakriti and escapes from worldly tribulations. The Buddhists say that there is no permanent soul because everything is changing, but within every sentient being there is a single-pointed consciousness that, although always changing, retains its individual identity.

We have agreed with the Buddhists that *change* is the Reality. Even if there is nothing beyond the Cosmic Conscious Energy—when we view this energy as Absolute—still it is progressing or moving, by evolving in its own being and depending on nothing else. In this

movement, there is a constant development of subtlety which is always becoming something different and something of higher value.

This change from gross to subtle no one can deny. The outcome or emancipation of higher values points out with certainty that some constant new thing is being achieved. It therefore follows that some new form is perpetually needed so that this transformation to higher values can be expressed. Then we have to accept that the Cosmic Conscious Energy is in constant flux and the resulting change is quite real.

Now we come to the question of time. Change means one movement to another, one phase to another. The measurement of the different stages can be done either with the change of appearance or through the concept of space. Nevertheless, time is also an important, integral and inseparable yardstick-instrument of measurement. With the establishment of the theory of relativity, time becomes a more integral part of the Cosmic show.

Time in relation to change of things in space is not hard to understand. In other words, take the growth of a plant on the first of January, 1973. After two months, (on the first of March of the same year) the plant may have grown in height two inches. So this growth of two inches has been achieved in the span of two months. Now this question of time that is measured in minutes, hours, days and months can be calculated on the basis of lunar or solar movement.

In other words, time can also be calculated on the relative movement of the planets to the sun in our solar system; but the movement of the sun in our solar system can also be related again both to another greater sun or star around which our solar system revolves. Our system also may be viewed as going on a continuous run with tremendous velocity from nowhere to nowhere. In other words, it comes to this: whenever we come to the question of relating movement to the finite state of things, we can have some idea only when we fall back on some comprehension or concept of the Absolute or Infinity.

At best we think in a negative way. That which is not finite is Reality and that which is finite is not Reality. But to put it bluntly, however much we speculate on the Absolute, we who are in a human body living in the physical world must say that the relative and finite world are more real to us than the Infinite or Absolute.

There are other difficulties also. On ultimate analysis, if we say that everything is energy or Cosmic Conscious Energy, or as the Hindu scripture says, *Akhanda Chaitanya*, and if this energy—whatever it is called—is conceived in motion, another difficulty arises. Motion means movement of one thing from one place to another.

Then we have two concepts: conscious energy, and also motion. The logical conclusion we come to is that space simply means the all-inclusive pervasive stage of the condensation of Cosmic Conscious Energy. Motion means the expression or emancipation of this Cosmic Conscious Energy, moving out from the center to the circumference and then back again to the center. Whether it is viewed as so-called matter, as mind or as soul, these two aspects (conscious energy and motion) are constantly functioning.

The meeting point of these two forces comes when there is an effort to move out to create something new. When the Cosmic Conscious Energy acts to create in this way, a meeting point comes.

Viewed from the finite mind, the meeting point is artificially carved out to a state of *stay*, and this *stay* or pause is what this author is calling Samadhi.

In the relationship of man to Divinity, the movement of going back to center is the movement of spiritual life. It is the return of the Prodigal Son to the Cosmic Father. It is the return journey of the Soul to Purusha. The meeting points along the way are the states of Samadhi.

In this quiescent state the Father takes charge. He gives a new shape to the soul and pushes it on to a new creation. As we have already said, this state is Samadhi from the standpoint of the Cosmic Father as well as from the standpoint of the finite soul. This is a state of concor-

dance in space and time. It is a state of equilibrium when apparently no one acts.

Since there is no condensation, there is no conception of space. Or we can say that from that moment onwards space again seems to develop. We can follow this concept further, to say that in Samadhi—although there is apparently some change in reality—the change is in idea only and action is deferred so far as the physical aspect of this change is concerned.

We find ample examples in the animal kingdom. A polar bear or a snake—while in hibernation—is little affected by bodily decay. So, also, when a Yogi voluntarily goes into hibernation at a high level, this cessation of the life force in the body might be termed *Samadhi*. At least the physical changes in the body of a Yogi in this state go on at a slower rate than in a man who is living in a normal pattern.

Although man is part and parcel of the Cosmic show, there is a unique factor in his nature. His whole concentration is focussed on achieving some higher realization. The Yogi's vital energy is not dissipated in mundane affairs but is used consciously to acquire wisdom and thus the state of Prajna or Samapatti or Kevala is reached.

So Samadhi leads first to less physical change and decay, and second, to a geometrical or multiple expansion of consciousness, for the more rapid realization of higher values; third, the soul or self is transmuted into a finer state of existence, whereby it creates a new world itself and acts through its environment as a concomitant factor to help the world as a whole. That is why the Yogi who meditates alone in the Himalayas, even though outside the touch of human civilization, can do much service to humanity as a whole in uplifting through his meditations and spiritual practices the consciousness of the whole of humanity to a higher realization of Divinity.

This is the way that a new world is created through Samadhi—on whatever grade, stage or level it is practiced. The more subtle and higher the state of Samadhi,

the more it contributes to a state where human beings can appreciate higher values. In this way a higher civilization gradually comes wherein new intrinsic values serve as a springboard to create more subtle values which then serve as the basis for a whole new world.

This conception differs somewhat from the conception of Sri Aurobindo. He lays stress on both the individual effort to open the petals and the effort to call Divinity until there is a mixing of the finite with Infinity. In these pages the author has shown his own point of view; the descent of Divinity need not be sought after at all.

Divinity automatically comes. Grace is always there. Grace automatically showers. The finite Soul automatically goes up. The human being automatically becomes Divine. The opportunity and necessity is for humanity to know the art of holding the cup right side up, so that it can catch this Divine Grace. This is the art of Yoga. The *Gita* says: *Yoga Karmasu Kausalam.* This means that Yoga is an art of work. To practice this art is to live joyfully in harmony with the Divine play.

So the world, although apparently overcast with devilish forces, nevertheless becomes higher and more subtle all the time. It can't help but do this. Man himself is caught in this stream and he will have to achieve higher and more subtle principles. This urge to go higher is innate in his nature.

But there are some who are conscious of this Cosmic mystery. They are the chosen few who through their own practices accelerate and expedite this movement from gross to subtle. Through meditation and Samadhi their own physical bodies and the world around them come to a higher, more subtle plane of existence and all other life follows gradually.

The physical cells in the body of the Yogi who achieves the higher stages of meditation and Samadhi become so refined that the human body no longer needs gross physical food; this can be explained by the physical laws of the human body. We have explained in the above that when a person goes beyond Samadhi, the mind that

functions through the senses no longer exists. It is this lower mind factor which is in need of physical food. So when the soul—living as a tenant in the physical body—no longer is active on the physical level, the gross mind no longer functions.

This is why the body's need for sustenance through gross food goes. The mind that so long worked in response to the senses becomes more subtle, and recoils to at least the stage of Buddhi which as we have already explained is a stage when Cosmic wisdom and all knowledge comes automatically in a flash. No longer does knowledge come through the law of association or any other rational process. All knowledge will shine spontaneously whenever wanted or needed. At that stage there is a transmutation of the mind. There is no question of supressing mental modifications since the mind is no longer operating on the gross level. This is the stage beyond Samadhi that Sri Ramakrishna wanted Vivekananda to achieve.

Perhaps the most important new thought that Sri Ramakrishna has given us today is that *there is no end to God-realization*. That being true, everything is impermanent in the sense that everything is passing through evolution or time. Everywhere there is motion and movement. Now if everything is God, and this Everything is always moving, then does God keep perpetually moving? And to where is He moving from where? Probably only God knows the answer, and that is His headache. We can see, however, that there cannot be movement without change.

Change, then, is an integral part of the Reality, and if this Reality is called *God* or *X* or *Y* and the microscopic formation of this Reality is called *soul* or *being*, then *souls* and *God* and *being* are all changing. The Buddhists say that everything is change except *being*, but in this being there is a permanent changing identification that does not alter. The Vedantists and Advaita Vedantists both say that neither soul nor God changes. But if God is always

the same, never changing, what is the fun? Would God not get very bored?

What a difference of opinion! The Buddhists feel that change is the Reality and the Vedantists say that permanence is the Reality. In between these two opposite views are many others going this way and that.

Ours is that both the Vedantists and the Buddhists and all the other shadings are partially true. When it is said that change is the Reality, the emphasis is on the world of appearance; when the view is that everything is permanent, the emphasis is on the Divine Essence which is the Principle in and through all things.

In other words, when the Cosmic show is viewed as the Absolute, God is permanent, changeless, etc., because change is to move from one place to another. But if God is everything and everywhere, where can He move to? And how can God who does not need anything, and who lacks nothing, need change at all? But when viewed from the finite point of view, everything is—of course—changing.

So, from the Infinite point of view, God does not change; but from the finite angle of vision, He does. These changes come from within, as a spider spins a web out of himself, to tread on and to enjoy or as a child sitting before a mirror amuses himself by smiling at his reflection; just so God wants to enjoy Himself.

He reflects Himself in millions of souls and watches the fun. In this way, He acts, He moves, He changes; but from His point of view, He is changeless and permanent.

Again and again we have said that something new comes out of Samadhi, and all through the ages man has thought that he had the power to meditate and to achieve this Samadhi. The man who is spiritually matured can begin to see a higher truth. It is not man who is meditating, it is God Himself. When God wants something new to come either in the gross physical world or in the idea world, then He creates a self-imposed state of quiescence. Something new then comes out for His enjoyment.

Now in all of the ages past when man tuned to this state of Divinity he had a tendency to think that he was meditating and practicing Samadhi. But it was really God who had self-imposed a limitation by sacrificing Himself, we might say, for the creation of something new. When God is in Samadhi and man tunes himself to this state of Divinity, man participates in the Samadhi of God. How this works will be developed later in this chapter.

When this occurs, the truest and fullest love ensues between the finite and the Infinite. When the finite soul joins the Infinite soul, it is gradually realized that it is a conscious part-and-parcel of the Infinite Soul. In fact, the finite soul comes to love God so much that it wants to be integrated again, like the Prodigal Son with his Father. This is the inception of true spiritual love.

The starting point of this spiritual love between the finite and the Infinite is in Samadhi. God's longing for man creates the mood. It is in Samadhi that the process of evolution works. When God condenses Himself to a state of equilibrium, to give a new impact, new idea, new form, or new Ideal to humanity, this is grace. Through His grace, all things come into being. His grace is always there. As we have repeatedly said, to receive this grace we must hold our cup right side up.

Everything depends on our surrender to God. The finite being (Jiva) must dissolve the ego if he is to enjoy Samadhi with God. To experience Samadhi consciously, this is the key to joy. But Samadhi concerns God more than man. When thesis and antithesis merge into synthesis and everything comes to a standstill, and there seems to be a halt in evolution, then God, through His grace, brings a new idea and something emerges either as a new species, a new ideal or a new dimension in human thought. In this emergent evolution He finds a new way to enjoy Himself. God is eternally saying: "Let Me enjoy Myself! Let Me love Myself more! Let Me be many!"

Thus the Cosmos is in a continuous flux, and

simultaneously there is a quiescence, out of which the impact is given constantly for a new show. When as a finite being we look at the whole Cosmic process, we find that creation comes from an undifferentiated mass of energy in the form of atoms, electrons, protons and whatnot, moving in wheeling motions.

From this nebulous state we find the birth of a planetary system, a solar system, a stellar system, etc. The scientists tell us that these gaseous masses gradually harden, and through this process comes the birth of planets like our mother earth; from this new form simple life sprang forth, and as we all know, animal and human life followed in succession.

Although this process is continuous, some distinct stages can be marked out in the Cosmic evolution. It is as if God as Cosmic Conscious Energy, acting in each of these stages, draws from time-to-time a curtain on something of the past that has been achieved, and the curtain goes up again on a new era which is ushered into existence. These pauses or halting stages between curtains are the Samadhi of Cosmic Conscious Energy. In other words, that which is to be manifested in creation springs forth from the idea world of God.

It may even be that God Himself had no idea world in the beginning. Perhaps in the joy of just being, He felt an urge to love and something came out and God then manifested this new urge consciously and voluntarily. From this angle of vision, creation can be seen as something that is attained by God Himself out of Himself.

How does God arrive at this pause? In the *Vedas* it is told that God practices austerities (Tapas). These are too involved for present discussions but for now it is enough to suggest that God sacrifices something so that new stages can be manifested.

Or it may be that there was never a beginning—only a continuous Cosmic Play always and forever. However that may be if we look closely at the physical world in which we live, these states of Divine pause or Samadhi can be noticed. God, as Cosmic Conscious

Energy, shows this Divine play in a multitude of ways. For example, even in blind nature we find a rhythm and in this rhythm is a definite pattern of pauses wherein separate and distinct phases of life uniformly work out. The sun in our solar system is not the only clock that announces by rising in the east and setting again in the west, the birth of the day and the death of the night respectively.

There is something more subtle, more accurate and very timely in the many unforeseen mechanical forces that work through nature. This is the force that shows itself as the alarm clock of nature to make the cock crow regularly before dawn, and the jackal cry at regular intervals during the night. Some mysterious universal clock radiates unforeseen and unnoticed messages to which these lower forms of nature respond unconsciously.

These signs in nature are the witnesses to the continuous flux of time in which separate compartments or divisions come out in regular successive rhythms. Human gross intelligences cannot tap into this rhythmic force; the lower kingdoms move automatically in harmony with these pauses to herald the advent of something new. However, at first glance this something new appears to be only a repetition of the past.

Some great Yogis of yore, noticing and observing these phases of change in nature's so-called blind workings, have discovered interesting subtle movements and pauses in their own nature. With a disciplined, pure mind they have observed that from the time of sunrise to the time of sunset, something new inside themselves happens about every two or three hours. Between each such period, there is a pause in the activity of the vital force that lasts approximately five minutes, wherein the life force within seems to be in balance.

This balanced state is called Sushumna. In this neutral pause nature pulls the average man unconsciously to that which is to follow, or propels him to work intellectually in a new dimension; in other words, it is in this five

minute period when the mind seems calm, unbiased, and unaffected by every pull of nature's action from without or within, that some mysterious impetus is given to find some voluntary future action.

The Yogis say that this pause is actually a state of Samadhi that is granted regularly by nature, wherein the human mind can have the best opportunity for correct judgment. If a person practices any kind of meditation during this period it will afford him the opportunity to reach more easily an intense state of concentration. Samadhi and Samapatti, which are states of intense calmness and tranquillity wherein something is achieved, are more easily experienced with the help of these natural periods of quiescence.

There are many ways described in the Hindu scriptures how to determine this state. Every individual has his own particular period that he must discover for himself, to know when this pause comes for him. One method to discover this time is for him to sit calmly at sunrise with body erect; then he should take a few deep breaths and try to attain a state where inhalation and exhalation practically stop.

On closing his eyes, he will find that the diffused sunlight penetrating his eyelids does not give the same color continually.

There will be a constant change; sometimes the color will appear steady and sometimes it will be in motion; various colors come and go, and different forms and shapes alternate. When a person can sit calmly in this fashion, with closed eyes for at least three hours per day, and can note the change of colors from sunrise onwards, he will detect that every two or three hours some color will repeat itself and the movement will be still.

If the practice is deep enough, he will be able to find the particular color to which his nature is akin. His own color will not only predominate, but it will be soothing to him. The energy force of this color then acts on his cells to transform them to a more subtle state. His color may

be blue, red or otherwise, but it will repeat itself at intervals and will stay for about five minutes or so.

When the meditation gets deeper, these periods can gradually be extended. This is how a person can take the help of this period of quiescence, as well as the help of his own color; this is Nature's way of contributing to a state of Samadhi wherein something new can be realized. In other words, it is a natural Samadhi, for which Nature's contribution is uppermost. We are saying that God is in Samadhi and the Yogi has joined God in this Samadhi.

Sri Ramakrishna has told us what will come of this Samadhi in which God and man have joined together; he has told us many novel and grand things that will definitely come into fruition in the next phase of human life. Everything he has said is based on the idea that all spiritual values merge in love, and that the highest conception of love is Nitya Radha (eternal loving play). This always presupposes there are two players: the lover and the beloved.

Looking deeply into His message and His life, we find many clues. Perhaps the first is how a man should consider his wife in the new age. Humanity for the most part will have passed the animalistic tendency to procreate through physical union. When this sex desire goes, what happens to the relationship between man and woman? This question is best answered in the life of Sri Ramakrishna and his wife, Sri Sarada Devi, lovingly called by her disciples, Sri Ma.

Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Ma lived together without physical union, but in a spiritual love. They had no need to procreate and both had transcended the desire for sex. We have only to look into the life of Sri Ma to find that in the midst of physical hardships and miseries, she remained forever divinely cheerful and full of joy. The subtle love experienced through spiritual union with her husband far outshadowed any satisfaction that could have been gained through physical love, no matter how pure.

When two souls are placed close to each other by the Divine Player, the spiritual bond between them is not only

very meaningful but gives indescribable and beautiful fruit. This is the concept and vision of the significance of soul mates. Through their spiritual union the Cosmic Play will take new shape.

No other Incarnation, saint, philosopher or scholar has shown us by a living example this goal to be achieved; not procreation, not social demands, not economic pressures, not even mental companionship will be factors in this new relationship. Only spiritual values with spiritual joy will be there.

Sri Ramakrishna practiced many facets of religion, one after another; in each case, he achieved the goal according to the Yoga or faith he was practicing. In the past, no individual, whether an Incarnation or a highly developed human being, ever achieved such a Herculean task. Certainly this achievement was not to show His personal greatness, but to show some principle for posterity.

Not only does this indicate that all paths are true, but it shows that the future will bring a gradual converging of all methods, goals and concepts and values to give a new form and a new goal. Sectarianism will go, and in its place will come as many practices as there are individuals—each separate but all adhering to the Cosmic Principle of the Whole.

No one faith will stand alone, but each individual will be a blend of all facets of the truth. Even in the gross world, the man of the East has discovered he cannot segregate himself from the man of the North, or the man of the South from the man of the West. The conception of space and distance has been almost altogether eliminated. As a result, there are already revolutionary changes in the social, political and economic structures of nations as they come in contact with the impact of other nations.

There is already today a continuous interflow of different concepts and ideas and values taking place. Wise is the nation that can reject the errors of the others and accept only the benefits. The interplay on this level has already started in the spiritual field, and in fact this was en-

visioned by Sri Ramakrishna long before the evidence was to be seen in the outer world.

When the cells begin to be Divinized, there will be certain observable changes in the physical appearance of the body. These have been recorded in the appearance of Sri Chaitanya and other saints, but they have been more patently demonstrated in recent times in the life of Sri Ramakrishna. There were many witnesses to His appearance while in Samadhi. His skin would be glowing, luminous like a copper bowl. His body temperature would shoot up as long as He was in a rapturous mood of Samadhi.

If He happened, while in this state, to touch a man who was of ill disposition, *even though he did not know or even see who touched Him*, He cried out in pain. In this state He also could not stand the touch of metal. His nature was so pure and the physical cells so Divinized that gross contacts gave pain. Beside the physical structure, the mental nature of man will change. In other words, the Divinized cells will command that life be lived in an entirely new pattern.

No longer will he rely on his rational faculty. In its place will be something beyond even the intuitional range. This flashing of knowledge into the mind will be so reliable that all other sources of knowledge will drop away. Creation will come mostly from this pure mind. All physical joy will be transmuted and transformed into spiritual joy experienced within man himself. There will be a mutual loving play between the individual cells; this spiritual play will replace the gross sexual enjoyment.

Being far more beautiful and exciting than anything man has yet experienced, this joy is indescribable. Sri Ramakrishna once told that, in his own body, he found spiritual intercourse on a similar pattern of physical intercourse, but from cell to cell. Infinitesimal focal points of all the numerous souls in each of the body cells, when Divinized, can have intercourse with each other. This completely new experience on the spiritual plane far over-

shadows the grosser physical pattern of intercourse that is now experienced between male and female.

This new being will take food in a different way; by mere thought he will be able to take whatever gross food he requires directly from the Cosmic Energy. This process, to some degree, is manifesting itself even today in the lives of such highly developed souls as Busuddha Nanada Paramahansa, Milan Ma, Pawharibaba, Satya Sai Baba and many other saints who are materializing food and other gross objects out of the air.

This shows definitely that the Cosmos is capable of giving gross objects directly, without the time-consuming and cumbersome process manifesting in the world today. It is only logical that this process of direct creation, wherein the transformation of energy to the state which we call matter, can be made to act in the process of eating and digesting.

Already there are some Yogic practices for this purpose. In fact, this author has come in contact with a group of Yogis who live high in the Himalayas—in a hidden valley—who have almost matured this art. They are practicing a Yoga of getting energy directly from the sun, air and water, taking the help only occasionally of gross food for subsistence.

We find that in this Divinized man, a new value will evolve on the basis of the spiritual; the intrinsic values of truth, beauty and goodness that man is now striving for will become more subtle, and will at some point merge into a new value. For example, where today a person is dependent on external music, in the future he will enjoy the deep and superb musical sounds that come through contemplation. This perpetual resonance of Cosmic sound is called the Anahata Dhwani. Many Yogis hear this beautiful and subtle sound when in deep concentration.

All of the above gives a concept akin to Sri Aurobindo's ideal to be achieved. He has emphasized that man is to raise himself up and God is to descend, until

there is a meeting place, a co-mingling and then all beings will live in the peace and joy of Divine Harmony.

Sri Ramakrishna has carried this ideal somewhat further. He says that when all the faculties of man are integrated, God can be experienced in all His glory, both as a Divine Person and as the Absolute. With this achievement will come a superior type of humanity, and the Divine Play will take on a new dimension. There will be no man and no God *as envisioned in the past*.

There will be a new species. There will be only man-God. Thus, this new high state of integration is as Sri Aurobindo envisioned and even more. By meditating on the life and teaching of Sri Ramakrishna we can find the clue for the new dimension life is to take.

A point now arises for consideration. When a human being has attained such a stage in development when he will be living for—and in—the newly achieved higher value spun out of Truth, Beauty and Goodness, he will naturally find that this planet Earth as we know it today will have become unsuitable for his new and subtle part in the play. This planet will have to be transformed by Nature Herself in order to be a fit place for the Divinized man. It is quite possible that this man will also go to other planets which offer a proper environment for this new type of living.

This is not to be confused with the projection of astral travel in an astral body. It will be a Divine Ego that will continue the play in a Divinized physical body on a Divinized planet, wherever it may be.

History shows us the trend. Twenty thousand years ago man depended upon raw meat, half-fried meat and fruit from the wild trees of the woods for his food. The cooking of various foods since those days has passed through many phases of development which have depended on the produce of the field. A new type of corn or vegetable, and the processing of same, has been continually resulting; our Mother Earth has shown so far no stepmotherly attitude in meeting the demand of the continually newborn civilized child.

Will this process go on forever and ever until this Mother Earth becomes cold, barren and dead like the moon? Or will it take constantly new faces to serve the needs of the new species? Perhaps, after this state is achieved, the highly evolved species of man may turn to another planet in the solar system; he is already planning to go to Mars or Jupiter for exploration and settlement. The unmanned spacecraft's journey to Mars proves that this will not be a dream in some future time.

This question has an essential bearing on the concept of Samadhi, as we shall presently see. Samadhi, again we say, is a jumping board for the attainment and realization of new and higher values. We have seen that the cells must change in order to attain and appreciate the higher values which appear from time to time, and from age to age. The cells of the human body, in turn, depend on food and we have already hinted in the above that both the food supply and man's system for assimilation will change.

The physical structure of the cell requires some kind of physical food, no doubt. The physical food which we take now is in the form of meat, grain, fruit, honey, milk, etc. These gross foods are converted into subtle foods such as amino acids, etc., which go to feed our human system. This conversion takes place through a series of mechanical and chemical functions that have evolved in the human body.

This pattern has been developing for thousands of years. Although there is some apparent uniformity maintained throughout the ages in the assimilation and converting of foods in the human body, we find some new methods are constantly developing.

Another aspect should be considered also. The process and time for digestion and assimilation of food changes according to the need of the particular constitution of the man in question; the type of food is also determined by the nature of the man. For example, a highly intellectual person will need a special type of food for his

mental activity. A physical culturist will need more protein food for his muscle.

The structure of the human brain is very complex and it has been changing constantly as humanity becomes more intellectual and less physical in nature. As we have seen, when intellectual achievement arrives at the culmination of its highest attainment, the intellectual faculty leaves its responsibility to intuition; in the first state of intellectual attainment, reason leaves–and intuition takes its place. Then the need for food changes. Necescarily the cooking method also will be changed.

In this respect, the author knows some highly spiritual persons who have evolved to require very limited and special food. There is one saint, living in isolation away from the multitude of human beings, who depends on just one bale fruit per day (a special fruit grown in India) and perhaps half a liter of milk once or twice a week. The author noticed in this person tremendous physical and spiritual force.

Saints and Sadhus who have evolved to this state have developed a great depth and profound knowledge in scriptures, and a wonderful power of argument and discussion. Their skin shows a beautiful glow and even in their late 80's their physical and mental faculties are in good condition.

The author has also told of some mountain terrain in the Himalayas where there are bands of Sadhus, one of whom the author met accidentally when he was a young man. This Sadhu comes from a group whose span of life is from 200 to 400 years. Changes have developed in their cells to reach a new dimension of health and finery by a method which is a special type of Kaya Kalpa.

This Yogic practice, a mixture of Hatha, Raja and Jnana, is a simple practice that is done for one hour a day. It is also necessary for the Yogis to live at least six months during the year in a secluded place. They take for food only milk mixed with honey, the root of some herbs,

and the powder made from a fruit called amlaki which grows in India. This is sufficient for their sustenance.

This band of Sadhus lives a life of isolation and seldom exceeds the number of twenty in one group. They can foresee events to come or tune to the idea world of the future; knowing the future in this way, they help human thought—through the radiation of their meditations—to be true and just, so that they can become proper vehicles for the Cosmic Play both in body and spirit in the age that is to come.

They depend least on the common food that is the sustenance of ordinary man. Every ten years, when the body appears to be wearing out and aging, they rejuvenate it by absorbing food directly from the Cosmic Sun. During this period they supplement the source of Cosmic Energy only to an extent by taking certain physical foods like milk, that have been prepared in a special manner.

The author feels constrained to point out here that all living beings depend either directly or indirectly on sun, air, water, earth for food; the energy that man needs to sustain his life and activity comes principally from the sun. The energy that is consumed by a plant or animal is transformed in diverse ways and then stored in the body cells. Thereafter it is transmitted to man as he eats or drinks those things. One of the barriers to the higher development of human species is removed when man is able to absorb power directly from Cosmic sources like sun and air. In fact, this is only *one* of the goals that is to be achieved.

Direct absorption of Cosmic Energy is one of the keys to the future destiny of the human being. Whatever attempt to harness the explosion of population is made, we see from day to day that it is not the answer. The farmer now tries to produce several crops a year on one acre, when hitherto he was satisfied with a single crop. Manure collection systems have been replaced largely by mechanically manufactured fertilizers. Other facilities of

modern civilization may contribute more and more to additional yields of the field; but all these efforts have their limit.

Why? Even though today's science helps to produce more and more, in an arithmetical progression, the population has been increasing at a geometrical rate. Hence, a day must come when this approach to cope with the demand for food by the people of this planet through the produce from the field, will be recognized as futile.

In fact, man is already looking ahead, to try to explore the sea for food and water. Even though she may give of her fruits in abundance, here also there is a limit to supply. We say that increasing food supply is not the whole show.

The fallacy is this: scientists are still thinking the human being will live merely as an animal, eating food, living and dying. This assumption is the fallacy of our so-called modern civilization; but Nature is working silently behind the screen. Those who peek will find that as progression in consciousness goes from gross to subtle in the Cosmic Show, the Cosmic progress will also reflect his movement in nature.

Man through an inherent Cosmic force which is permeating every cell, will be forced to move on. In this evolutionary movement, food must be made more subtle and refined, and will be absorbed in a novel way. Thus, the present-day attempt of the scientists to explore the sources of the ocean for the type of foods needed by man, although laudable, is only a temporary stopgap measure. It is not the true ultimate solution.

Mother Nature, while pushing all Her children on through evolution, will produce Her own solution in due course; we have only to open our eyes. We need not grope in darkness. This is why the Rishis repeatedly asked us to look within rather than without for true values.

Taking this hint from the Rishis, several points become clear. To summarize: first, human requirements on

the physical level will change; food will become finer and more and more energy will be absorbed directly from the Cosmos. Second, the attention of man will go more and more to spiritual values, and physical values will play a minor role. This will bring less conflicts, worries and suffering.

A day is coming when through successive stages, a new species will evolve on this earth; this new man will be our own future generation, who have evolved through spiritual practices to achieve higher values.

The third point is this: if necessary, according to Nature's whim, the future man may live here, or he may meet with his other brothers in God, for talk of evolving a new society of mankind on other planets.

In the domain of stars, one cannot say for certain if there are other solar systems older and more advanced than that of our own, or whether there are advanced beings like us in those spheres. In fact, the denizen of earth has no right to a monopolistic claim that he is the cream of evolution. In sequence of time, our solar system may have come into existence much later than other solar systems in the Milky Way. Who knows, perhaps the citizens of those solar systems are far ahead of us, and we are just proceeding on a beaten track with each unit having its own originality.

Sri Ramakrishna has given us many a peep into the terrestrial and celestial regions of the future to indicate things yet to come. It is too much to say whether or not these dimensions will encompass our planet alone, or whether they will be enjoyed and developed elsewhere.

The author humbly suggests that the new type of being will find this planet Earth transformed to a more subtle state; this does not rule out that he may also find his future either on this planet, or on another in or beyond our solar system—perhaps he will come and go.

This new man, with his body Divinized through Samadhi, will be supra-physical, with a nervous system and physical cells which are capable of holding the Divine

bliss. He will be a God-man free to enjoy the play with His Beloved. But however this may be, this transformed being will live in a more subtle and peculiar way than human man has ever imagined.

As we have said before, the Divinized soul will be the tenant of a highly developed form, to play the role of a *companion* or a *playmate* to the Cosmic Player. One thing is certain: there will be a new society, a new order to serve the Cosmic Player in the new era.

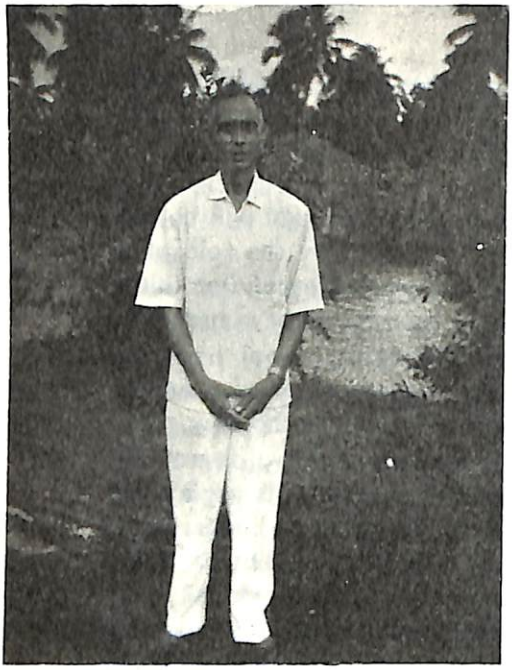
There is one last point we want to emphasize again. Nitya Radha is the Ideal and Principle of the new play. Nitya Radha, the eternal Divine Play of Love, is not between God and man as *unequal* partners. It is a play between God-Man and Man-God. Man will no longer look to a higher Divine Power to motivate the Divine Play. God will become man in a multitude of individual focal points, and man will become God—because the separation between the finite and the Infinite has been dissolved step-by-step in Samadhi; Nitya Lila Samadhi is the jumping board for Nitya Radha.

To explain this in another way, God will have an even higher status than that allotted to him in the past, and man will have a higher status than he has yet imagined. This is the very latest contribution to spiritual thought, given by Sri Ramakrishna, the latest Incarnation. This is the clue to the dance of joy in love, so often expressed by Him and witnessed by His many devotees; it is He who gave the highest place in the Cosmos to Man-God.

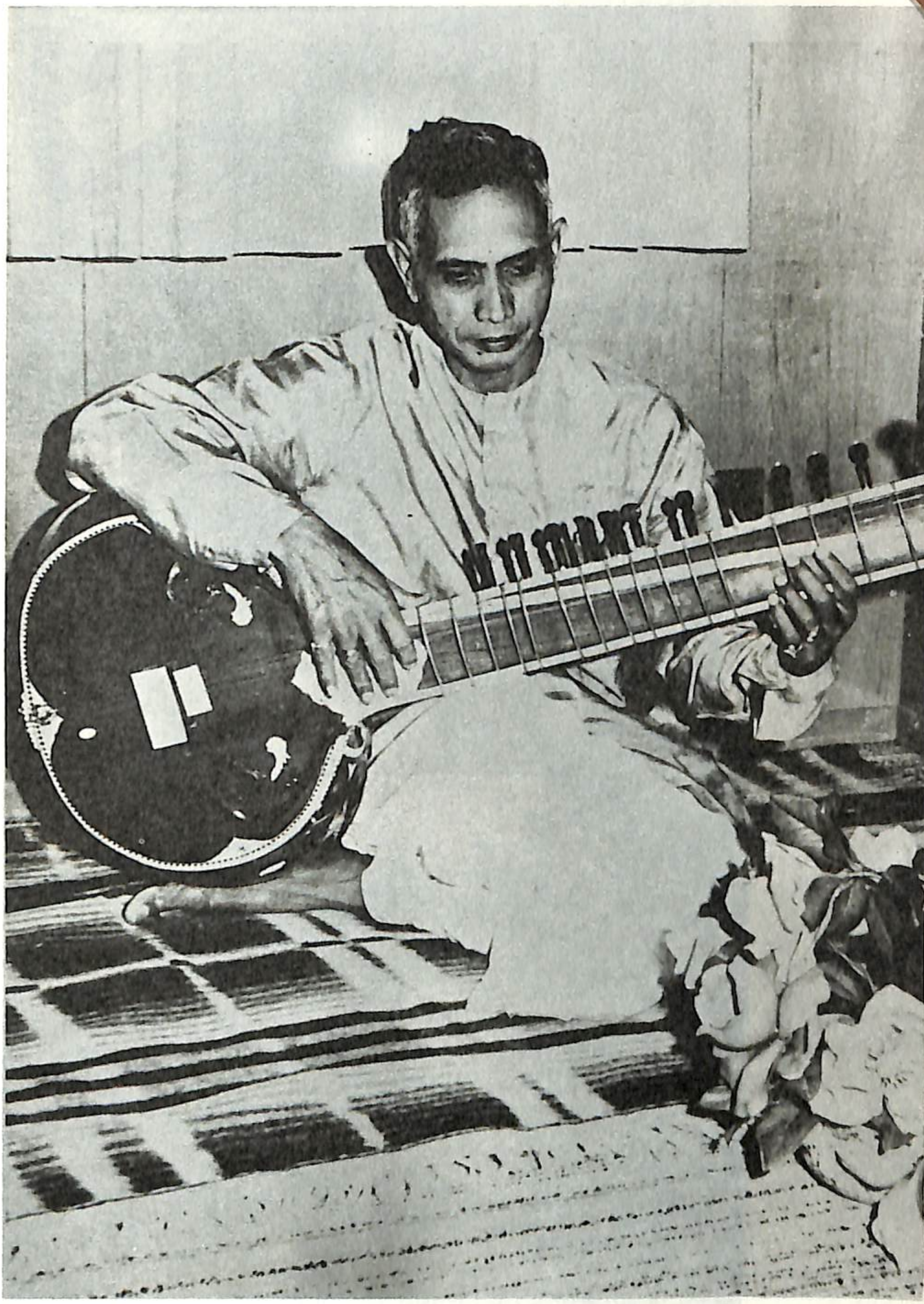
It is Sri Ramakrishna who has shown us the goal and destiny which is to be achieved. Samadhi is the jumping board that leads us from time to time, from life to life, and from earth to heaven. There will perpetually be a new pattern of the Cosmic show evolving.

Always a new species will come to play a new role in a new Cosmic Play. The Cosmic Player is eternal. It is this Player, in a multitude of focal points who is enjoying joyfully and eternally.

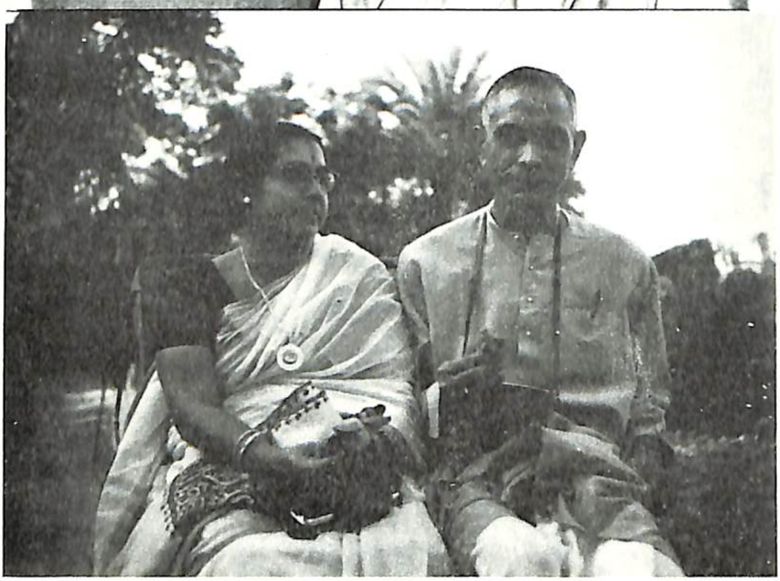
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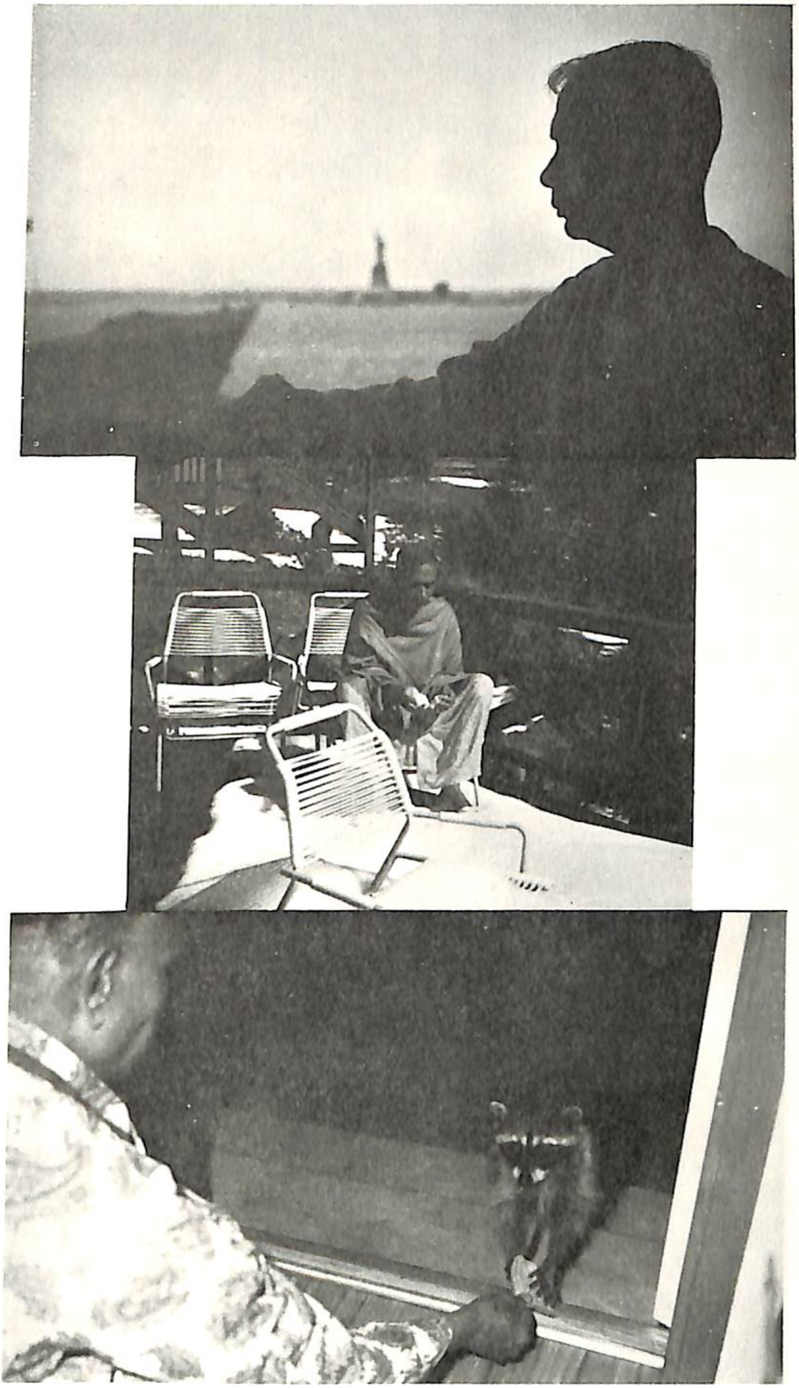














Sri Surath Chakravarti

Sri Surath Chakravarti is known as a saint by the Yogis, holy men, and Pundits of India. He was born in what is now Bangladesh March 1, 1913. He graduated from Scottish Church College with a Masters in Comparative Religion and Philosophy, then later received a Law Degree from Calcutta University. Sri Surath has also practiced and studied music on the Sitar for 30 years. His spiritual practices have been a secret to all except the saints who can see who he is. He does not pose as a Guru but repeatedly says, "I am a fellow pilgrim who has come to share experiences. I will help you be your own Guru." In this book Surathji shares the cream of 40 years of spiritual experience. He has practiced Hatha Yoga, Raja Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Mantra Yoga and Tantra Yoga to realize the goal. He found that all Yogas converge into a mature Bhakti which is the natural and ideal Yoga for this age. The reader will surely feel the presence of a truly knowing soul.

This book is a challenge to every yogi, mystic, Christian, Hindu and Zen Buddhists, to everyone treading the Inner Way. The challenge is friendly. The challenge is to grow, to go beyond present concepts of Samadhi, Satori, and Cosmic Consciousness. There is a new goal to achieve. Never before in West or East have the states of Cosmic Realization been so thoroughly described, compared and clarified.

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